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THE SERVICE OF THE STATE

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FOUR LECTURES ON THE POLITICAL TEACHING OF T. H. GREEN

BY J. H. MUIRHEAD, M.A., LL.D.
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

"Who serves a greatness not his own"

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To M.T.M.

Who taught me to feel what Green
taught me to think.

"Many of the troubles of to-day reflect the distraction of minds to which a sane and balanced view of society has never been adequately presented."

—B. BOSANQUET.

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PREFACE

WHEN I was asked to lecture on T. H. Green's political teaching at the Summer Meeting in Oxford last year, it seemed a favourable opportunity to recall attention to the light that a comprehensive and coherent theory of the nature of the State and its relation to the individual may throw upon current problems.

At the time at which Green wrote the Individualism which had been the leading note of the earlier part of the nineteenth century, though largely discredited in practice, seemed to have acquired new theoretic support from its supposed alliance with the doctrine of natural selection, and to be destined to recover all its old ground under the vigorous leadership of Herbert Spencer. Green was profoundly convinced of the inadequacy of the whole point of view as a basis of constructive statesmanship, and had the foresight, in his *Lectures on Political Obligations*, to bring all the resources of his mind to the task of rendering the ground for it henceforth untenable. It is mainly due to the influence which he exerted on the thought of the last part of the century, that

open appeals to the individualistic point of view only serve to discredit in the public mind the causes that depend upon them. If he has made the bearing of his teaching upon the question of Socialism less obvious, this is only because at the time at which he wrote the danger to continuity of national and industrial development seemed to come chiefly from the other side. The principles he advocated are not less applicable as a criticism of the Realism that sees in the State the organ of an all-wise and omnipotent Providence, than to the Nominalism that sees in it only the name for "a crowd of individual administrators."

In preparing the lectures on which this small book is founded, I felt that it would be impossible to make the full scope of Green's ideas comprehensible without some explanation of the philosophical doctrine with which they were in organic connection. In now venturing to publish them, I need hardly say that I have added considerably to what I found it possible to say upon this head in the short course of popular lectures I was asked to give. I have not, however, cared to alter the lecture form, which may serve to remind the reader of my justification for retailing much that is already familiar in current philosophical literature.

A different justification is required for the liberty I have permitted myself in not always being careful to attribute to Green only these

applications of his teaching for which chapter and verse may be quoted in his writings. The interest of his ideas seems to me to depend far more on their general bearing upon contemporary life and the ideas they have suggested to others, than on the particular form in which he expressed and sought himself to apply them. What I have aimed at is to be true to the spirit of a teacher whose power and personality as all who knew him felt were, owing to his untimely death, very inadequately expressed in his published works.

I am indebted to Dr Helen M. Wodehouse for carefully reading the manuscript of these lectures and for useful suggestions.

J. H. MUIRHEAD.

March 1908.

CONTENTS

PAGE

BIBLIOGRAPHY ix

PREFACE xi

LECTURE I

THE PROBLEM OF THE 'SEVENTIES

Green and his contemporaries—The problem of his time—Philosophical basis of solution in theory of knowledge—The human and divine mind . 1-18

LECTURE II

THE IDEA OF THE GOOD

Desire presupposes self-consciousness, self-consciousness freedom—The ideal not greatest happiness, but a form of human life—Objection to the vagueness of the Good as thus defined—The pragmatic test—Characteristics of the Good as (1) personal, (2) social—The Good as a divine principle—Idealism and Evolution—Idealism and Positivism 19-46

LECTURE III

THE STATE AS WILL AND IDEA

PAGE

The need of a new theory of the relation of the State to the Individual—"Will, not Force, the basis of the State"—Earlier political philosophy in England—Meaning of Green's Theory—The place of circumstances—Great Men—The general will—The rights of individuals—Illustration from the right of property 47-80

LECTURE IV

IDEALISM AND POLITICS

Idealism and Democracy — State interference—Socialism—Idealism and Empire—Conclusion 81-113

APPENDIX 115
INDEX 117

THE SERVICE OF THE STATE

LECTURE I

THE PROBLEM OF THE 'SEVENTIES

Green and his contemporaries—The problem of his time—Philosophical basis of solution in theory of knowledge—The human and divine mind.

GREEN AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. — When in 1875 I entered as an undergraduate at Balliol, there were three remarkable men in the College, all since passed away, but then at the height of their powers and reputation. Of these the Master, Benjamin Jowett, exercised by far the widest influence over the College and in the outside world. He was like an atmosphere pervading the place and extending its pungent influence far beyond it. Whenever in the world a Balliol man was settled, there was a pupil of Jowett. Richard Lewis Nettleship exercised a magnetic charm on all who came in touch with him, and was the best-loved man in the College—perhaps in the University. This

was not merely due to the union in him of the scholar and athlete, so dear to Oxford. There was an intellectual grace and modesty about him that, while it prevented him from seeking or making disciples, "won all men to him."

But undoubtedly the deepest influence was that of Thomas Hill Green. This was clear at the time from the impression he made upon the ablest men in the College. "To other real or imagined great people in Oxford," writes one, "I took off my *hat*, but before Green I felt as if I could take off not the hat only but also the *head*." It has since been proved by the effect of his teaching on the whole intellectual and social movement that has marked the close of the nineteenth century. Yet the source of this influence was by no means obvious at the time. To many of his contemporaries he appeared merely a somewhat eccentric college tutor who wasted his time in attending unprofitable parochial discussions of the City Council, of which he was a member, or starting evening schools for working men in the slums of St Clement's. To others he was a dry metaphysical lecturer who wasted the time of his pupils in minute and wiredrawn criticism of England's greatest thinkers, expressed with an obscurity of style which rivalled that of his favourite hero, Sir Harry Vane, of whom it was said by Baxter that "his unhappiness lay in this that his doctrines were so cloudily formed and expressed that few could understand them, and therefore he had few

disciples." What in reality made him the greatest force of his time in the University was just the union in him of these two elements, the citizen and the idealist philosopher,—not as accidentally combined in a man distracted between them, but as organically united with each other. To him an ideal was no creation of an idle imagination, metaphysics no mere play of the speculative reason. Ideals were the most solid, and metaphysics the most practical thing about a man. On the other hand, practice was no conventional round of tasks, but the opportunity of giving expression to ideas, of clothing them with substance as we clothe our thoughts in language.

The aim of these lectures is to show more fully what the union of the two meant to Green himself, and by what potency in his ideas they have entered into the spirit of our own time, and hold a place to-day as one of the chief directing forces in thought and action.

THE PROBLEM OF HIS TIME.[1]—Green has himself described the characteristic spiritual feature of our own time. "To be free, to understand, to enjoy," he tells us, "is the claim of the modern spirit." To find ourselves at home in the universe, to realise all the capacities of human nature in a world adaptable to our purposes, to feel that we are cast in an environment that is responsive

[1] See *Popular Philosophy in its Relations to Life*, Works, vol. iii. p. 92 foll. What follows is a paraphrase rather than epitome of this essay.

to our deepest needs, are spiritual claims which any system of doctrine seeking adherents in these days must satisfy. A review of the chief movements of recent times is a review of the chief forms in which they have found expression. The modern revivals of poetry and art are founded on the conviction of the essential kinship between nature and spirit; religion seeks the divine in the human; political effort in all its highest forms is the expression of a belief in the reality of the social spirit as the deeper element in the individual. Yet the teaching of the reigning philosophy as represented by such great names as John Stuart Mill, George Henry Lewes and Herbert Spencer seemed to be entirely out of sympathy with these assumptions. It is not necessary to go deeply into it to find the reason.

The analysis of mental life in which it was founded had succeeded in resolving the contents of mind into impressions coming from without, and their reproduction in images and ideas that followed laws of their own analogous to the laws of gravitation and cohesion which controlled and explained the action of material things. In the same spirit it had analysed our volitional life into the attractions and repulsions which our pains and pleasures have established between ourselves and things. It is these feelings, or rather desire for the one aversion from the other, and not the things themselves or any relation in which by inheritance or acquired disposition we stand to

them which are the real motives of our actions. We are not here concerned with the details of this theory, but merely with the consequences that seemed to follow, and indeed were openly claimed by its supporters. If man's thoughts were thus controlled by laws of mechanical action and reaction between his impressions and ideas, if his conduct was the inevitable result of the strongest desire or aversion as determined by past or present feelings of pleasure and pain, there seemed no place left for freedom. Every stage and phase of the life of man as knower and doer seemed as inevitably predetermined as the fall of a stone or the flow of a river.

In other forms of determinism it has been possible to find inspiration in the idea of an overruling Providence selecting and directing man's action as the higher form of his own will or self. But the logical consequence of this philosophy seemed to be the denial of the assurance of any such direction, and even of any self at all. Nor was this all.

Philosophy stands for the effort to understand to know the very inmost reality of things. This is its boast. To this it has sacrificed all. Yet what has it gained? Our impressions and ideas, truly, we may understand, at least we must accept: we have them, and therefore they are. But what guarantee is there that they represent anything more permanent than themselves? Once this question is seriously asked, there can be but one

answer. Whether in the form of scepticism as in Hume, or of agnosticism as in Huxley and Spencer, we seem committed to the denial of any real knowledge, the possibility of any true understanding. Not only is the human spirit set against itself in the antagonism between the desire to know and to be free, between reason and the deepest element in moral consciousness, but there lurks this deeper contradiction in reason itself.

To these conclusions an alternative was indeed offered by the philosophy which from the time of Butler had opposed itself to the Baconian school, and this was powerfully represented in such writers as James Martineau at the time of which we are speaking. But the appeal to intuitions in which it sought to find protection against the conclusions of a too victorious analysis, has never been able to make its peace with modern methods of research. To accept it was merely to close one rift in the human spirit by opening another.

Nor was it of any avail to appeal to the faith of the poet, the evangelist or the practical reformer. It was indeed true, as has been said, that their work presupposed the existence of a world of spiritual values, to which physical facts stood in the relation of symbol to reality. "The man," as Green puts it, "to whom nature has become human, who has recognised either a kingdom of God or a power of eternal death within himself,

who has found in a free state not a mere organisation for satisfying his wants, but an object of interest identical with his interest in himself, has already for himself answered the question whether it is he that is natural or nature that is spiritual." But valid as this answer might be for the individual it could not be made generally available for those who were touched with the peculiar malady of the age — "the disease of thought." And this defect could not fail to react on practice. "Man needs the *theory* of his own greatness." If in an age like ours no such theory is forthcoming, "the very fullness of moral and artistic life thickens into speculative chaos." Instead of the whole-hearted co-operation between thought and practice which has marked the great periods of achievement, we have distraction and hesitation—the palsy that comes from "the scepticism of the best."

If satisfaction was to be found at once for the intellectual and the moral part of man's nature, thought must be met on its own ground: nothing short of an entire reconstruction of philosophical theory would suffice.

It was here that Green saw the problem of his time. His originality consisted not so much in seeing it (others saw it as clearly as he), but in the depth with which he felt it, and the particular manner in which, both by thought and practice, he set himself to meet it.

It is worth while, in view of recent criticism,

to emphasise the point of view from which he thus approached the problem of philosophy. He has been attacked by humanistic writers as the prince of intellectualists, a metaphysical Frankenstein who spent himself in setting up as the ultimate truth of things a logical monster unrelated to human purposes. It may very well be that in the issue of the controversy, which he waged unremittingly with the abstractions of the prevailing philosophy, he identified himself too exclusively with the intellectual tradition which it represented. But his starting-point, at least, was humanistic. The test of philosophical ideas was their working power as a basis for human effort. They must be in harmony with man's deepest desires and aspirations—more particularly with his need to be at one with nature and his fellow-men. To justify this unity to the intelligence "to find formulæ adequate to the actions of reason as exhibited in nature and human society in art and religion" was the purpose of philosophy as he understood it Its failure just to discover such formulæ was the condemnation of the popular British philosophy of his time.

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF SOLUTION IN THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE.—Stated in the most general terms, Green saw that its mistake had consisted in starting from parts taken in abstraction from the whole to which they belong. The correction must be to insist upon the wholeness or

unity of life and experience as the only means of understanding the parts. This, he held, must be the keynote of the new philosophy, the master-light of all its seeing. His own strenuous analytical studies were all directed to bring it home from various sides. They take their start from the theory of knowledge as the most fundamental and the most clearly defined of the problems of philosophy. The older analysis had sought to explain knowledge as the result of the mechanical aggregation or (if this was too obviously inadequate a metaphor, as it seemed to Mill himself) the chemical combination of ideas. Interesting and fertile as this way of regarding mind when adopted with full consciousness of its presuppositions and limitations might be, it could only lead to error when taken as an adequate account of concrete mental processes, and made the starting-point for metaphysical deductions. The reason was that in its effort after simplification it had overlooked the element due to the particular nature of consciousness as a unifying, interpreting and therefore interpenetrating principle. In the language of the time it overlooked the part played by the mind itself, which as that by and for which alone there could be any combination of ideas, could never be the result of the mere combination. Rightly regarded knowledge is an active function, not an accretion: a development of the nature of mind as a unifying process, not the mere filling of a passive

receptacle, however mouldable this may be conceived of as being. Adopting the language of recent psychology, which Green's analysis anticipates, it is the fulfilment of a purpose or "intent," not a mere forced acknowledgment of a "content" —a conquest as we might say required of the mind by the conditions of its own expanding life, not a mere passive acquiescence in a foreign visitation. If we ask wherein particularly this function consists, it is seen that, like all other vital functions, it consists in a process of differentiation and integration. It differs from others in that its operation is motived by the consciousness of the all-important distinction between self and object, what appears to us and what is in reality, and of the necessity which is bound up with the very being of mind to bring the two to a unity. It is this self-differentiating and self-uniting process which marks off human consciousness from that of the lower animals. The precise difference between this interpretation and that of the older school may be illustrated by an example. If we ask wherein our knowledge of the room in which we are consists, we may, if we like, resolve it into "impressions" of colour, expanse, light and shade, heat and cold, noise and silence; but these are not the room: taken by themselves, they are mere appearances. To know the room we have to recall where we are and what we are about, the Oxford and the Schools we otherwise know, and herewith its relations to

other things and places, working it thus at once into the organised context of our experience and into the realities of our world. Before we can be said to have an *object of knowledge*, we must have interpreted the scattered data by the pre-existing contents of our minds which we call our "experience," and by recognising the harmony and continuity which subsists between the new and the old, have assented to the instatement of the newcomer as part of a system or whole constituted and maintained by the relations in which all its parts stand to one another.

This in condensed statement is Green's well-known doctrine that "to know is to relate." Thus barely stated it is not without its difficulties, and lends itself perhaps too easily to parody. Thus he has been accused of seeking to resolve everything into relations with nothing to relate, as some physicists are accused of resolving matter into motion with nothing to move. This is as though we were to resolve a railway locomotive into its coupling irons,[1] or a sentence into its connecting particles. It need hardly be said that this was not Green's meaning. What he meant was that what gives reality and stability to our knowledge is the reality and stability of the relations that are established between its several parts. To know a thing as it truly is, is to incorporate it through its differences and identities with other things which already by a similar

[1] Professor James's illustration.

process have achieved comparative fixity and substantiality. Apart from this organising process knowledge would resolve itself into a series of isolated impressions as meaningless as the cars without the couplings, the vocables without their connection in articulate sentences.

Along with this correction in what we might call the psychology of knowledge (the analysis of the process which actually takes place when we know anything) goes a correction in the older account of the criterion—in the logic of knowledge. Mill's statement of this in his *Logic* is well known. We cannot here go into detail. The conclusion is, that the truth of any item of knowledge, *e.g.* that the sun has risen on this cloudy morning, ultimately rests upon our belief in the uniforming of nature, and that this itself rests on the accumulated experiences of constancy in the sequence of events. The defect of this account is not that it finds the criterion in an objective world of "nature," but that it seeks for the guarantee of harmony with nature in the mere accumulation of experiences of the connection between "ideas." Such an accumulation could only have meaning to a mind which *brought* to experience the conception of a world of consistent relations into which the fact that claims to be true must enter as an integral part if its claim is to be justified. The standard, in other words, is to be found in the mind's own ideal of nature as an inter-related whole. Without this no

accumulation of experiences could give us more than "a bundle of expectations of which one might indefinitely strengthen or weaken another," but of which none could give to any other the right to claim to represent the real world and to be true. With it we are justified in seeing in the actual extent to which system is realised, as true knowledge develops, the guarantee of an ultimate unity between our knowledge and the reality of things.[1]

THE HUMAN AND DIVINE MIND.—The last words serve to remind us that a theory of knowledge was with Green only a step to a metaphysic or theory of reality and a theology or theory of God. From the above analysis it followed that there could be no reality that was not related to mind and the activities of mind. However beyond complete apprehension by our minds the ultimate reality of things might be, it could never be independent of mind. A thing in and by itself, such as Kant had supposed, and Hamilton and Spencer had borrowed from him, was a contradiction in terms. Nor is there any reason to believe that our thoughts about things,

[1] For the more technical statement of the argument, I must refer to Green's *Lectures on the Logic of J. S. Mill* (Works, vol. ii. especially pp. 304 and 306, quoted in the Appendix below). The point we have to carry with us as bearing directly on Green's theory of the Will is that when we speak of anything as true or false, we do so on the ground of its relation to a whole of organised knowledge existing actually in no human mind, but prefigured in every mind which is possessed of reason, and feels itself pledged to be reasonable.

the relations by which we seek to understand them, are other than the real thoughts of real mind, or that in defining them as metaphysics seeks to do in its theory of cause, substance, and other ultimate forms of conception, it is not handling reality. From this Green passed with an almost startling rapidity to the existence of a self-revealing spirit, whose thoughts indeed are not as our thoughts, seeing that we know only in part, yet are not in essence different since it *is* part that we know.

The argument for the being of the Divine he puts in several different ways, according as he looks at the constitution or at the end, at the content or at the "intent" of knowledge. From the former point of view it is argued that the reality of relations that can exist only in and for a mind, and yet which are not our individual creation, implies the reality of a universal mind by which they are created and maintained. "To assume because all reality requires thought to conceive it, that therefore thought is the condition of its existence, is indeed unwarrantable. But it is another matter if when we come to examine the constituents of that which we account real—the determinations of things—we find that they all imply some synthetic action which we only know as exercised by our own spirit. Is it not true of all of them that they have their being in relations? And what other medium do we know of but a thinking consciousness in and through which the separate can be united in that way which consti-

tutes relation? We believe that these questions cannot be worked out without leading to the conclusion that the real world is essentially a spiritual world which forms one inter-related whole because related throughout to a single subject."[1]

From the second point of view it is argued that the presence in us of an ideal of completed knowledge which is at once the source and the criterion of all truth, proves that our life is rooted in a form of being whose fullness is not exhausted in any merely temporal series.

"The assurance of there being a reality one, complete and absolute has been the source of that very knowledge which cannot become a knowledge of such reality. It is involved in the presence of reason in us as the consciousness of a subject which we do not know but are, and through which we know. Though communicated to us in a mode which does not allow of its being in a strict sense known, it keeps before us an object which we may seek to become. It is an element of identity between us and a perfect being who is in full realisation what we only are in principle and possibility. *That* God is it entitles us to say with the same certainty as that the world is, or that we ourselves are. *What* He is, it does not indeed enable us to say in the same way in which we make propositions about matter of fact, but it moves us to seek to become as He is."[2]

But these arguments are in principle the same.

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 145.

[2] Works, vol. iii. pp. 267-268.

They both rest upon the axiom that the part implies the whole. Man only knows in part. But this is not all: the animals also may be said to know in part. Man knows that his knowledge is partial, and this can only mean that in the knowledge of the part the whole is in some sense already present.

Stated in this condensed form, the doctrine of the "timeless self" of which our individual selves are "reproductions" is open to manifold misunderstanding. Nor are its difficulties diminished by the examination of the passages in which Green develops it, where it becomes obvious that there is a certain vacillation in his own thought. By some he has been accused of going too far; by others of not going far enough: he makes an unjustifiable assumption in identifying the ultimate or absolute reality with Mind and Will; and again he leaves us with a conception of the divine personality which excludes from it all movement, purpose, effort—all, in a word, that is really characteristic of mind and will.

This is not the place for detailed criticism. I am trying merely to make the general outlines and spirit of Green's teaching intelligible in relation to its practical tendencies. In reply, therefore, to the first objection, it is sufficient to note that he laid no stress on the attribute of personality as commonly understood. He habitually thought of the source of man's power as a "divine principle" that was hidden within him, rather than as a

divine personality existing outside of him. He maintained that we conceived most worthily of the highest above ourselves when we conceived of it under the form of the ideals which are highest in ourselves. If it is urged that this is to make God a merely subjective and at best "regulative" idea, he was prepared to reply that it could only appear so to one who made the twofold mistake of thinking of an ideal as something merely individual and subjective, and of God as we do of particular things in space and time. That our ideals are not merely subjective is shown not only by their internal authority, but by the establishment in the world of knowledge of the growing system we call truth. Nor are we likely to understand the real nature of our life in the world till we have learned to know the principle which sustains it not after the flesh but after the spirit, and to seek God not in the wilderness of temporal things but in the witness of reason and conscience.

This explanation contains also the reply to the second objection. It is quite true that Green speaks of knowledge and good as something already achieved in the universal mind, and of God as "a subject which is eternally all that the self-conscious subject as developed in time has the possibility of becoming."[1] For such language there is ample warrant in the utterances of religion. Indeed it is difficult to see how it can be avoided by

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 197; cp. p. 199 and vol. iii. p. 247.

a being who has only forms of language which presuppose time to express his relation to the Eternal. But the spirit of his teaching is to conceive of the Absolute not as in a state of rest contrasted with the movement and struggle of human life, as something "already existent" contrasted with a yet-to-be (this is to bring it under the conditions of time from which it is expressly excluded), but as the deeper reality of the life in time. And this, as we have seen, is best figured by us through the element in our own lives which we call our highest purposes or ideals. There is thus nothing to justify the criticism commonly brought against him by pragmatic writers that he undermines the value of human effort by making it a meaningless reproduction of results already attained in an eternal world. It was no part of the Idealism with which his name is identified to maintain that we are unnecessary to the divine plan, or to deny that in knowledge as it may be realised by us a new result is achieved, new possibilities come to light, that out of the treasure house of the Eternal are brought forth things that are at once old and new.

From these metaphysical, it may be mystical conclusions, we must now turn to the truths that correspond to them in Green's theory of Good, which more immediately underlies his political teaching.

LECTURE II

THE IDEA OF THE GOOD

Desire presupposes self-consciousness, self-consciousness freedom—The ideal not greatest happiness, but a form of human life — Objection to the vagueness of the Good as thus defined—The Pragmatic Test—Characteristics of the Good as (1) personal, (2) social—The Good as a divine principle—Idealism and Evolution—Idealism and Positivism.

In the last lecture I tried to show how the problem of his time presented itself to Green. While everywhere in art and poetry, in politics and religion, there were the stirrings of new life inspired by the belief in the presence in man of a principle that raised him above nature, philosophy seemed to offer no means of justifying this faith to the logical reason, but appeared, on the contrary, to have demonstrated man's entire subjection to the laws of mechanical action and reaction, by which physical events are explained. This division of the modern spirit against itself Green sought to heal by a re-examination in the light of fuller philosophical knowledge of the grounds of this conclusion, whereby he succeeded in showing that the popular theory rested on a misinterpretation of the ultimate facts of human nature. Put in a word his

argument was that the impressions and images which had been taken as ultimate psychical constituents analogous to the atoms of the material world were in reality a fiction. Instead of being primary data of consciousness, stuff of the mind supplied ready-made from without, our sensations take form and being as elements in knowledge from the mind's own synthetic activity. Relation, therefore, is a fundamental factor in our world which so far from being derivable by analysis from the data of experience is presupposed in the very structure of all that can be given to a mind that is capable of self-consciousness. As interpreted by Green, we saw further that the admission of this contention carried with it the consequence that human consciousness was only explicable on the presupposition of the existence of a universal or divine consciousness, present at once in mind and Nature and forming the guarantee of their ultimate unity. We have now to see how he applied these results to human conduct: what light they seemed to him to throw on the nature of desire and will, the ideal of human life, and the relation between human ends and the wider purposes discernible in the world at large.

DESIRE PRESUPPOSES SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS FREEDOM.—We have already seen the interpretation that the current theory gave to the meaning and mode of operation of motives in human conduct. Our actions were conceived

of by it as determined partly by natural impulses and wants, partly by the remembered pains and pleasures that have accompanied former experiences. In either case we have an entirely natural sequence of events, the rise of the want or the idea of the former feeling, followed by an activity deriving its direction and energy from the direction given to it by the motive and the strength with which it acts. The cause or motive, and with it the action, may be of any degree of complexity, but this cannot alter its fundamental character as an event conditioned by other events, as a resultant in mechanics is conditioned by the forces that enter into it. According to Green, this account is as entirely misleading as the corresponding account of knowledge. It omits the distinguishing mark of human desire, whereby it becomes something more than animal impulse or appetite. (What makes desire as what makes knowledge possible, is the relation of an object to a conscious self, and through it to other objects.) (To desire a thing is not merely to feel a want or remember a pleasure, but to set the idea of the thing before the mind as more or less definitely related to the self, and the other objects in which as a self it is permanently interested.) It is true men often seem to act without any such reference beyond the moment, but just in proportion as they do so, do they relapse into the condition of the lower animals, of creatures controlled not by conscious purposes but by "events," accidental impulses coming to

them from the world without, or from organic reflexes and instincts within their own bodies. This correction implies several things which it is important to carry along with us.

1. According to the older view of which Hume was the most consistent exponent, the moving force in human action was always some feeling; "passion" was the mistress, "reason" was only the handmaid concerned with the discovery of means to execute the behests laid upon her by another, but without part in the determination of ends. According to Green, the characteristic of human action is that it is determined by desire, which as distinct from mere appetite implies the distinction of object desired from the self that desires, and the idea of some relation between them. To realise this is to perceive that there can be no such dualism between reason and passion or desire, as the older theory imagined. Even our most passing desires presuppose the operation of reason.

2. While this is so with regard to all our desires, it is still more obviously so in regard to the deeper desires and purposes that we call our sentiments and affections. These have been formed in us by a process of self-identification with things and other persons, presupposing more or less conscious approval, so that there is a true sense in which our world of interests or desired objects, like our world of known objects, may be said to be self-constituted.

3. Seeing that the object of desire is conceived of in relation to ourselves as something to be possessed or assimilated by us—something we shall be *better with*—there is a sense in which all desire may truly be said to be a form of self-seeking, the resulting volition a form of self-fulfilment or self-realisation. Whether this is accompanied by an actual feeling of self-*satisfaction* will depend upon circumstances, as, for instance, our being alive and cognisant of the fulfilment of our desires; but this does not alter the fact that desire projects itself upon an object or form of being with which for the time we identify ourselves, and in which in anticipation we live.

The outcome of the whole analysis is not that some desires are more than natural, but that wherever we have desire at all, whether it be for some satisfaction of our animal wants, as in Esau's desire for the pottage, or for something as far as possible removed from them as in the desire for the kingdom of heaven, we have as an essential element in it a selecting, distinguishing, idealising activity, only possible to a being endowed with self-consciousness, and not to be explained by any merely physical analogies. To the student of recent psychology which confirms this analysis[1] it is unnecessary to labour the point. Its significance for Green lay in the fact that at a stroke it seemed to establish human life on a basis which

[1] See, *e.g.*, Stout's *Manual of Psychology*, p. 533 foll. It is not intended to identify Professor Stout with Green's deductions, or even his manner of stating the theory of the will.

raised it above the events and phenomena of the natural world. Events and phenomena in the shape of feelings and impulses enter into the moral life as chemical and mechanical processes enter into the life of a plant or sensations into the life of conscious beings; but they no more make it what it is or explain its differentia than gravitation and chemical action can alone explain the plant, or sensations can explain the contents of the mind. Wherever there is human desire (to repeat it), there is a conception of something as "good," and going along with it, of a self which will be "better" for having realised a good which is yet to be. And this means that there is something present which is more than natural, and gives us the right to speak of human action as self-determined, and therefore free in a sense in which nothing that falls short of it can be said to be.

THE IDEAL NOT GREATEST HAPPINESS, BUT A FORM OF HUMAN LIFE.—But the freedom thus guaranteed, however real it may be, is only formal. The power of doing what he likes or what he chooses marks man off from the lower animals, but the value of the power depends wholly on what he likes or chooses to do. This, as we shall see, is an all-important point in Green's political teaching. Here we are concerned with the ground of it in his philosophy of conduct in general. And what we have to note is that wherever reflection

has been directed with earnestness and insight to the question of the true meaning of freedom, it has always been seen that while it has its foundation in the power of self-determination as described above, true freedom consists not merely in being undetermined by any external or internal compulsive force, but in the acceptance of some object or principle of guidance felt to correspond with our own inmost and truest desires. This principle has been defined in various ways. To the Stoics it was the law of nature, to Kant the law of reason, to St Paul the divine will, that calls within us. But these are mere phrases whose significance altogether depends on the meaning we assign to the terms that are used. What is "nature"? What does "reason" enjoin? What is the will of God concerning us? To put these questions is to raise definitely the problem of the end of human life, the supreme need of the human soul, the principle that can give unity to our desires and purposes. It was in the answer that it gave to this question that Green found the central error and the chief source of practical misguidance in the popular philosophy.

Prima facie, there seems nothing particularly impractical or misleading in the doctrine that happiness or enjoyment of some kind is the chief end of man. As we have seen, it is implied in the claims of the modern spirit which are admitted by Idealist and Naturalist alike. It is not in the general definition but in the specific meaning to be assigned

to happiness that they part company. To the Naturalism of the day it meant pleasant feeling garnered into a life so arranged as to be productive of the greatest sum total. It was on a strenuous—to some it now appears exaggerated—polemic against this doctrine that Green expended his best powers of criticism in his chief ethical work. It is unnecessary to follow his arguments in detail. Their main tenor was to show in the first place that it was impossible to assign any clear meaning to the conception of a sum of pleasure. Our feelings follow one another in a series, a moment here then gone for ever, and there is no available means of accumulating and enjoying them as a whole. It is true (and this has since been argued against him[1]) that no experience really perishes: everything that we feel as well as everything that we think and do leaves a residue or deposit that enters into all subsequent experience, but it is not in their original character that our pleasures and pains may be said thus to remain with us, but as elements in sentiments or habits of feeling deriving their value from the *objects* to which they attach, and not from their forming a part of an aggregate that can ever be enjoyed as a whole.

But, secondly, even though the idea of a sum total of happiness could be made comprehensible, it never could be made to work as an ideal of human conduct, or the source of the distinction

[1] *E.g.*, by Professor Taylor in *Problem of Conduct*, p. 323 foll.

between what is morally good and bad, between what is and what ought to be. (All that is distinctively human in the life of man springs not from the desire to possess this or that object, and so far to realise a. better, but to *be* something more and better than he is; and this is precisely what an end such as the Hedonist conceives could never inspire.) Hedonism emphasises the desirability of being as happy as you can under existing conditions of character; it can offer no sufficient reason why you should face the pain of altering these conditions on the chance of increasing the sum total of your pleasures. Offering no ideal of a qualitatively different self which has a claim upon us simply and solely as human beings, it fails to provide the rudiments of a sense of obligation, and leaves us to explain as best we may the distinction between inclination and duty, what *is* as a matter of fact, and what *ought to be* as a matter of right. Common-sense felt a vague disquiet at this hiatus, and had found a corresponding satisfaction in the vituperations of Carlyle, Ruskin and others. (Green sought to justify the verdict of bankruptcy by showing precisely wherein Hedonism had failed. It failed because it offered as an end of human aspiration an object in which the human spirit, pledged by its own nature to self-betterment,) in other words to a concrete life of developed faculty spent upon humanly worthy objects, could never find satisfaction.

His contention may be illustrated from what has already been said of the criterion of truth. We there saw that the error of sensationalism consisted in setting up the mere accumulation of subjective impressions, mere uniformity of experience, as the ultimate test of the validity of knowledge, *Mutatis mutandis* the error in regard to the criterion of conduct is the same. It sets up a mere accumulation of feelings, the multitude of satisfactions as the test of the value of life and conduct. And just as the logical error is corrected by insisting on the conception of systematic interdependence in the world of nature as the ultimate test of truth, so the ethical error is corrected by insisting on the conception of the harmonious development of the whole of human nature as the ultimate end, and the criterion of what is truly good.

This correction enabled Green in the first place to substitute a concrete form of life—an "energy," as the Greeks called it—for the abstraction of a sum of feeling. It enabled him in the second place to give a real meaning to the distinction between moral good and evil, between what it is a duty and what it is pleasant or (in view of future pleasures and pains) prudent to do. The distinction presupposes a real qualitative difference between the objects of choice, but it was just this that the hedonist doctrine, according to which all objects were equally means to the one supreme good—viz. pleasant feeling—found it so difficult

to justify. If on the other hand we start from the conception of the whole person, or will, we can understand how it may identify itself with different forms of itself or seek fulfilment in qualitatively different objects, some of which may be in harmony, some inconsistent with the nature of the self-objectifying, self-idealising unity it claims to be.

The differentia of the good life is not that it is controlled by a principle of intelligent self-seeking as Hedonism, or of the greatest pleasure of sentient beings as Utilitarianism teaches, but, as he himself puts it, "by the consciousness of there being some perfection which has to be attained, some vocation which has to be fulfilled, some law which has to be obeyed, something absolutely desirable whatever the individual may for the time desire; that it is in ministry to such an end that the agent seeks to satisfy himself."[1]

If it be objected that we find little evidence of such a consciousness in ordinary human beings, the reply is that this is because we seek it in the wrong way. It is true that few men reflect sufficiently on the meaning of moral conduct to realise the presuppositions which underlie it, but a moment's consideration of the attitude of mind that we call loyalty to the established system of social morality or to the work that lies nearest to our hand, is enough to convince us that the spirit that works in ordinary human life and in the saint or missionary is the same.

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 134.

OBJECTION TO THE VAGUENESS OF THE GOOD AS THUS DEFINED.—A more serious objection to the whole point of view is raised by the vagueness that seems to attach to the idea of perfection, as contrasted with that of pleasure or happiness, and its consequent ineffectiveness as a practical motive. Its very character as an ideal—something whose realisation lies in the remote and even unimaginable future—seems to render it unavailable as a principle of immediate guidance. And this has led some recent writers,[1] who have in general accepted Green's refutation of Hedonism as a theory of the end, to seek to reintroduce it as a practical criterion. The difficulty was anticipated by Green, who sought to meet it by pointing out that while the objection would hold of an ideal, no part of which has been realised, it is inapplicable to one that has already found partial embodiment in the actual life of man. To a certain extent the ideal has shown by its actual achievements what its contents specifically are, nor is it beyond the power of reflection to form at least some negative conclusion in regard to its complete realisation. We may convince ourselves that this realisation can only be attained in certain directions of our activity, not in others.[2] In this passage it could, I think, be shown that Green goes fatally near admitting the rival contention in insisting on the merely "negative" character of our knowledge of ideal good, but it

[1] Particularly Dr M'Taggart in *Studies of Hegelian Cosmology*, chap. iv. c.

[2] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 180.

could also be shown that this is no part of his general doctrine, and, indeed, inconsistent with it. He is on safer ground when he goes on to point out that though we cannot say with any adequacy what the ideal capabilities are, "yet because the essence of man's spiritual endowment is the consciousness of having it, the idea of his having such capabilities, and of a possible better state of himself consisting in their further realisation, is a moving influence in him. It has been the parent of the institutions and usages of the social judgments and aspirations through which human life has been so far bettered, through which man has so far realised his capabilities and marked out the path that he must follow in their further realisation."[1]

THE PRAGMATIC TEST. — For the detailed account of the origin and development of these institutions, and the moral ideas corresponding to them, Green would have pointed to the new science of sociology, at the same time warning us against the assumption that is apt to mingle with such investigations, that the interest in physical life and the struggle for existence in which the process of development starts, contains the ground of explanation and the measure of the value of the ideal interests in knowledge, art, and types of moral character, in which it ends. It is, he held, a fallacy, from which the sociologist who accepts the idea of evolution ought of all others to be free, to regard what is later in origin

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 180.

as inferior in value and authority, or as exhibiting less of the nature and capabilities of the developing organism. Interest in science and art, love of goodness for its own sake and of God as a spirit develop later than interest in food and housing, in a neighbour's territory or the happiness that these may give, but it is only on a very crude notion of development that they can be regarded as for that reason of secondary or merely instrumental value. (We may be willing to accept the formula that Pragmatists have made popular, that our ideas and ideals have value only in proportion as they "work," but it would be a fundamental error to interpret it in a crude utilitarian sense. In the use that we make of it we have always to remember that the "working" is relative to what it is that is working, and what it is working for. Here the fundamental fact is, that life changes as the spirit of man develops in it, and that what "works" is dependent on the form which it takes, as well as the form on the working. It was the clearness with which they grasped this principle and were able to see in the spiritual entities of science, art, morality and religion, objects not merely of supreme instrumental value as the condition of the permanence of all other goods, but of intrinsic value as themselves the expressions of self-conscious spirit that constituted to Green's mind the lasting distinction of the great Greek thinkers. It was this that enabled them to express, with a fullness of outline

that has not been surpassed, the contents of the highest form of human good. Their account of it he sums up in a sentence.

"It is the will to know what is true, to make what is beautiful, to endure pain and fear, to resist the allurements of pleasure (*i.e.* to be brave and temperate), if not, as the Greek would have said, in the service of the state, yet in the interest of some form of human society; to take for oneself, to give to others, of these things which admit of being given and taken, not what one is inclined to but what is due."[1]

The modern idea of the good has developed in respect of the range of persons who have the capacity and therefore the right to participate in this good and (as a consequence) in respect to the range of the application of the virtues. To the former we admit no exceptions wherever human reason exists in its normal capacity. In respect to the latter we admit no limits short of perfection. With the rise of the conception of human brotherhood have been swept away all the reservations and compromises, the limitations and narrowness of application that are so apt to astonish and scandalise the student of Greek civilisation. Yet when all allowances have been made, the main outlines of the ethical ideal are those which were fixed upon by the great Greek thinkers — the free, disinterested devotion to knowledge and art, the conception of the

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 276.

intrinsic value of the rights of citizenship, and the life of social activities that is made possible by them.

If to these conclusions of reflection we add the witness of the concrete forms in which the idea of the Good has embodied itself in laws, customs and institutions, as the best of the Greeks insisted that we should, the way becomes plain enough to him that will see. "In the broad result it is not hard to understand how man has bettered himself through institutions and habits which tend to make the welfare of all the welfare of each, and through the arts which make nature, both as used and contemplated, the friend of man. And just so far as this is plain we know enough of ultimate moral good to guide our conduct; enough to judge whether the prevailing interests which make our character are or are not in the direction which tends further to realise the capabilities of the human spirit."[1]

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOOD AS (1) PERSONAL, (2) SOCIAL.—From the account of the good here given, we can further understand how it should present itself to us under two aspects apparently contradictory, really complementary to each other.

(1) It follows from what has been said of it as a form of will that it is individual or personal. Aristotle called it *ἐνεργεία*, which had the advantage

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 180.

of conveying the double meaning of activity and realisation—the movement outward to an object which the soul sets before itself, and the correspondence of the object within the limits of human life to the "idea" or nature of the self which seeks fulfilment in it. Circumstances may be so arranged by education and adjustment of the environment as to aid in the formation of the habits on which such activity depends, but without the individual reaction — the appropriation of the circumstances to the service of the end or some part of the end as above defined and the permeation of them with moral purpose—there is no realisation of any distinctively human good. This does not, of course, mean that anything so abstract as the highest good is an object which the individual consciously sets before himself, but merely that apart from the exercise of individual will no least part of it is realisable.

(2) It follows, in the second place, that the good is social. The ends in the pursuit of which the individual realises his true good are common to himself and all who are endowed with a like nature. The self which is fulfilled in them is no merely private self, but one which includes other selves, in that it includes objects in which all are interested as human beings. To the Utilitarian we have seen this was a stumbling-block, to the Hedonist foolishness. Happiness interpreted in terms of pleasure is by its very nature a private possession, one thing in the individual, another in

society, whose claim for priority of consideration in case of conflict can only be justified by a *tour de force*.[1]

On the idealist view, on the other hand, difficult as it might be to see in detail that individual and social good are identical, the problem of explaining the distinction between selfishness and unselfishness, inclination and duty was in principle solved when it was seen that the good of others was bound up with the good of the one, not merely as a means to an end, but as an essential part of it. With the possible exception of the satisfaction of the bodily appetites, it would be difficult to point to any object of human desire into the thought of which the good of others or a good conceived of as common to others does not enter. Even the satisfaction of the animal wants comes in the course of normal moral development to be conceived of as an element in a good which is more than individual.

It only remains to be added that on this showing the good is not merely personal *and* social. It is the one precisely so far as it is the other. It is just in so far as a man is able to set aside merely private ends and identify himself with the

[1] Bentham was not much troubled with speculative difficulties. He held that all men were by nature selfish, but that fortunately in a few—himself among them—selfishness took the form of benevolence. J. S. Mill explained that as everybody desired his own happiness, the happiness of everybody was desirable—without mentioning to whom. Sidgwick held that the possibility of discord between individual and general happiness pointed to another order of things in which sacrifices of individuals should be compensated. Bentham may thus be said to have met the difficulty by a psychological, Mill by a logical, and Sidgwick by a theological *tour de force*.

larger purposes of society that his life becomes rounded into the unity in which personality in the full sense of the word consists. On the other hand, social well-being is best served in the lives of individuals who make one or other of the elements in it a centre of personal interest, and possess the power and freedom to develop it in their own way. Personality lives in the material ends with which society supplies it, society lives through the form that free personality impresses on its purposes. To recognise this in practice is the sum and substance of political wisdom. It is the ethical and political counterpart of the religious principle that he that seeketh his life shall lose it, he that loseth it shall find it. Just in so far as the individual commits himself to the principle of co-operation in a social whole does he realise his end as individual personality; just in so far as society commits itself to the principle of the individuality of the citizens does it realise the unity and stability that constitute it a true "State." The further development of this idea must be left for the next lecture.

THE GOOD AS A DIVINE PRINCIPLE.—Meantime we have to add the note that is most characteristic of Green's theory of good. The evidence for the reality and the character of the ideal as we have sketched it, consisted for him, as we have seen, not in any mere inward witness or intuition, but in the nature of self-conscious spirit and the actual

facts of civilisation. It is this ideal operating at first subconsciously, but as reflection develops more and more becoming a conscious motive, that has brought into existence and continually sustains all that we value most in the world. But whence does this ideal itself come? What does it imply as to the real nature and true affinities of the being of whose life it is the guiding principle? Clearly though it reveals itself in him, it has not been his own creation. The lines on which it can be realised, the laws which control its development, are different indeed from the laws of physical nature, but they have their own definiteness and inviolability. Practical wisdom depends on insight into their character and acceptance of their guidance. But to recognise them in practice is one thing, to interpret their full meaning to ourselves is another. It is here that Moral Philosophy finds its deepest problem.)

To some, indeed, a "metaphysic of ethics" may seem to be of remote interest, having little to do with the everyday traffic of life. This, as we have seen, was not Green's view. He formulates in this connection the great questions of religious philosophy, insisting that it is idle to deny that a man is different according to the answer which he gives to them. "Is there a character which he may and ought to form for himself irrespective alike of what he is inclined to and of what is expected of him? Is there a God with whom as the imperfect with the perfect, yet as spirit with

spirit he may converse? Is he partaker of an eternal life so that what he is and not merely what he has done is untouched by physical death? These are perhaps questions which a man may answer affirmatively with little practical result, but which he can scarcely answer in the negative without serious effect, not necessarily on his outward course of action, or on the character which he presents to other men, but in the long-run on the inner life, on the character which he would present to one who could see it from within, and which he could scarcely help regarding in spite of his creed as of eternal worth."[1]

The philosophical ground of his own answer has been already given in what has been said of his theory of knowledge. In answer to the question, what does knowledge presuppose, his reply was a single interconnected world which could only be rendered intelligible when conceived of as sustained by the action of a single "self-conditioning and self-determining mind." From the point of view thus reached knowledge itself appeared as the reproduction under the form of time of the mind of a universal and timeless consciousness which therein found itself anew.

The same answer *mutatis mutandis* forces itself on us from the side of the will. As our knowledge, so our moral life is only ultimately explicable as the reproduction of itself on the part of a divine mind in which all the fullness of perfec-

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 222.

tion after which man's will fitfully strives, eternally dwells. This argument is not—any more than the other—an appeal to mere intuition, or anything deducible from an intuition. Still less is it an appeal to a matter of fact that can be established by induction in the ordinary sense, or that is open to observation at all. It rests, as we may say all truth inductive or deductive must ultimately rest, on the insufficiency of anything else to explain the facts. "Given this conception and not without it, we can, at any rate, express that which it cannot be denied demands expression, the nature of man's reason and man's will, of human progress and human shortcoming, of the effort after good and the failure to gain it, of virtue and vice in their connection and in their distinction, in their essential opposition and in their no less essential unity."[1]

IDEALISM AND EVOLUTION.—(1) This ethical proof of the existence of a divine element in man is open to the same objections as the metaphysical, and may be defended on the same line. We need only repeat the criticisms that seemed to Green to call for particular answer. The argument rests on the demonstrated presence in the mind of an idea or ideal of what is possible, but this, it may be said, forms no ground of inference to anything that actually exists here or elsewhere. The real is the actual; the ideal is mere possibility—an

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 182.

actual, perhaps, in the making, but to be taken with all the discount that ideality and futurity involve.

Green's reply, so far as I know, is the first attempt to turn the flank of the popular naturalism of his own time from the side of its chief stronghold in the idea of evolution. This idea since its announcement in biological form had been hailed as giving the finishing stroke to the old spiritualistic interpretation of the world. To Green belonged the merit of seeing that out of the strong might come forth sweetness, out of the eater meat. He pointed out that in anything in which real development is traceable, the present can only be understood in the light of the future, the process in the light of the end, the actual of the possible, the real of the ideal; and that, when this is reflected on, the result must be to reverse our ordinary judgments. For it forces us to see in what we call the possibilities of a thing that which as the guiding and formative principle in it is the ground of its reality, in what we call the actuality a merely passing phase in the development of what it truly is. "To any one who understands a process of development, the result being developed is the reality; and it is in its ability to become this that the subject undergoing development has its true nature. The actual at any stage of the process is not; while that which at any stage is we have to call the possibility of that which is not."[1]

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 224.

Applying this to human life we are justified in holding that the possibilities (the idea of which is the inspiring and formative principle of all moral effort) constitute when properly regarded the true underlying reality of which the finite embodiments that fill our view in time are only transient and imperfect phases. If we fail to recognise this ideal in its operating power, or recognising it to realise its significance, this is largely because of our familiarity with it. The spiritual guides of the race have been those who have been most sensitive to its call, the most ready to recognise in it the witness of a spirit greater than themselves.

What is original in Green is the clearness with which he saw that this interpretation carried with it the justification if not of the current formulæ yet of the essential faith of religion. "That in virtue of which I am I, and can in consequence so set before myself the realisation of my own possibilities as to be a moral agent" is seen to be identical with "that in virtue of which I am one with God." If it be objected from the side of religion, that this is to make God the source, and in a sense partaker of my sin and selfishness, Green is ready to admit it: "but for the identity of consciousness between man and God, man would not be a sinner." But he adds that "the source of selfishness and sin is also the source of that which overcomes sin." For seeing that "sin is the effort to actualise one's possibilities in that in which they cannot

be actualised," it is only overcome by the "moral discipline which directs the same effort after self-realisation into a truer way of attaining its end." He thus reaches the conclusion that "God is identical with the self of every man in the sense of being the realisation of its determinate possibilities, the completion of that which as merely in it is incomplete and therefore unreal . . . in being conscious of himself man is conscious of God and thus knows that God is, but knows what He is only so far as he knows what he himself really is."[1]

IDEALISM AND POSITIVISM.—(2) The second difficulty comes from another side. In discussing the nature of the good we saw that it resolved itself into the development of a form of will and personality which when closely scanned is perceived to involve a society of mutually dependent wills and personalities. We have now seen that this development can only be adequately interpreted when we conceive of it as the unfolding of a universal life, of which the actually existing things of time are merely the passing moments. Are these two results compatible with each other? Does it not rather appear that in proportion as we emphasise the divinity in human ends, we must cease to regard them as finding their centre and reaching fulfilment in anything so limited and passing as individual selves?

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 226-227.

While acknowledging the difficulty, and recognising in it the reason that has led Positivists and others to seek the centre in some larger idea such as humanity, a national spirit or a perfected form of social organisation, Green uses the opportunity to insist that apart from their embodiment in individual personalities all such substitutes are mere abstractions. As Humanity can nowhere exist apart from the nations that comprise it, so neither can a national spirit exist apart from the individuals who embody it. True, a nation is more than an "aggregate" of individuals. But this does not mean that we can have a national spirit that finds utterance anywhere except in the moral and intellectual achievements of persons. "Our ultimate standard of worth is an ideal of *personal* worth. All other values are relative to value for, of or in a person. To speak of any progress or improvement or development of a nation or society or mankind except as relative to some greater worth of persons, is to use words without meaning."[1]

Similarly from the point of view of history and "progress," progress implies a process in time, but it also implies that the results of the process are gathered together either for that which is the subject of it or for another. The distinguishing mark of human history is that its results are gathered together in self-conscious subjects. And from this, again, it follows that "the spiritual

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 193.

progress of mankind is an unmeaning phrase unless it means a progress *of* personal character and *to* personal character — a progress of which feeling, thinking and willing subjects are the agents and sustainers, and of which each step is a fuller realisation of the capacities of such subjects. It is simply unintelligible unless understood to be in the direction of more perfect forms of personal life."[1]

In these passages Green is wrestling with metaphysical difficulties which must be faced by all who would make their way through thought to a stable theory of human life. In others he gives himself a freer scope and strikes the note of mysticism, which some have felt to be the most attractive feature in his writings. One of these may serve to summarise for us the conclusions of this chapter, and give us the atmosphere he imported into all his practical teaching.

"As the poet traversing the world of sense which he spiritualises by the aid of the forms of beauty finds himself ever at home, yet never in the same place, so the *philosopher*, while he ascends the courts of the intelligible world is conscious of a presence which is always his own, yet always fresh, always lightened with the smile of a divine and eternal youth. Everything is new to him, yet nothing strange. The results of art and science, of religion and law, are all to him 'workings of one mind, features of the same face'; yet are the

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 195.

workings and the features infinite? No longer a servant but a son, he rules as over his own house. In it he moves freely and with that confidence which comes of freedom. Such freedom and confidence, indeed, if divorced from the moral life, become a ridiculous conceit. In their proper relation to it as giving fruition beforehand of that of which the moral life is the gradual realisation, they have the weakness, indeed, which belongs to all ideas not actualised, to all forms not filled up; yet are they not like faith without works, dead, but like faith as Christianity knows it—a permanent source of unhasting activity."[1]

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 90.

LECTURE III

THE STATE AS WILL AND IDEA

The need of a new theory of the relation of the State to the Individual—"Will, not Force, the basis of the State"—Earlier political philosophy in England — Meaning of Green's theory—The place of circumstances—Great men —The general will—The rights of individuals—Illustration from the right of property.

We have seen in the preceding lectures how Green sought to solve the problem of his time as it presented itself to him, by insisting on a theory of the nature of mind in its characteristic functions of knowing and willing, which, though comparatively new in England, may be said to have been the common property of idealistic thinkers from Plato to Hegel. All knowledge (to repeat it) is seen on ultimate analysis to rest upon the idea of a fundamental unity between subject and object, between the knower and that which there is to be known. This unity in its completed form is not something that can be said to exist as a particular thing. So to take it would be to reduce it to the level of another object. Rather it is the presupposition of all

knowledge: the ideal that sustains it, the principle that endows it with life and energy. From this it follows that in knowing the object the mind is not going into exile from itself, but in a true sense is coming to its own; while, on the other hand the object does not cease to be itself in coming to mind, but is coming for the first time to itself as an ordered world of rationally connected things.

Similarly all conscious purpose, in which we have to seek the characteristic of human as distinguished from merely animal action, presupposes an ultimate unity between will and the good which is its object. And this, again, *mutatis mutandis* means, that in realising itself the will is not destroying the difference between object and subject, but is building up an object which is more than itself; while, on the other hand, in being *realised* the ideal does not cease to be the very essence of the subject.

To all this Green only added, as the result of his own analysis, that the principle that thus at once guarantees the validity of man's aspirations after knowledge and moral good, and fulfils itself in them, can only be adequately conceived as itself a mind and will which is related to his as the universal to the particular, the complete to the partial, the divine to the human.

It is in the light of these ideas that we must interpret the particular subject of these lectures. "The dependence of the will of man in its divine

service," says Professor MacCunn,[1] "the constant presence in human life of a universal spiritual principle lies at the core of Green's whole ethical and political thought." In the present lecture I propose to take it in its wider aspect—his theory of the general nature of the State and Civic Institutions, and of their relation to the rights of individuals and classes.

THE NEED OF A NEW THEORY OF THE RELATION OF THE STATE TO THE INDIVIDUAL.—In the political problem of his time Green saw only an aspect, though to him the most important and pressing one, of the general problem as already defined. The first decade of the nineteenth century had been a period of almost blinding industrial prosperity. The inventions of the previous century, combined with comparative freedom from legislative restrictions upon employment and the great market which Europe offered for the products of the new industry, had led to unprecedented earnings in all classes. All the darker seemed the results of the general collapse that followed upon the cessation of the Continental war in 1815. The state of things that was then revealed opened men's eyes to the significance for human life of the change that had come over the industrial world. The phenomenal appearance of Robert Owen[2] with the rise of "Socialism" was a sign of the times.

[1] *Six Radical Reformers.* The Political Idealism of Thomas Hill Green.

[2] See Podmore's *Life of Robert Owen,* 1907.

It stood for two things which may be said to have given the keynote of the century's politics: the possibilities of human life under favourable external conditions, and the power of the community through collective action to assist in creating the required environment. It soon became evident that the particular lines advocated by the Owenites led nowhere in particular, but a movement of organisation had been set on foot under a larger ideal of Political Justice, which seemed to contain the promise of a higher form of social life than had as yet anywhere been achieved. Factory and health Acts, the rise of trade-unionism, education and municipal government were only the organs and outward manifestations of the new constructive spirit acting on the principle of corporate responsibility for all that affected the welfare of the individual. What had traditional political theory to say to these movements of constructive reform?

In the political teaching of the great English philosophers, from Thomas Hobbes to Herbert Spencer, it is impossible to trace the same continuity as is discoverable in their theory of knowledge, and even in their theory of good. There are important differences according as they recognise (with Locke) or deny (with Hobbes) the independent existence of social and sympathetic impulses; and, again, according as they conceive of political society (with the earlier thinkers) as the work of voluntary agreement, or (with the

later) as the result of unconscious growth. But a common note runs through them all. In all of them there is the underlying assumption that the State is a secondary and artificial product—a species of excrescence on the life of the individual to whom, and not to the organised community, we have to look if we would understand the rights of man. Necessary as may be the actions and abstentions on which government insists under present imperfect conditions, they represent in reality encroachments upon natural liberties of which, under more favourable circumstances, the individual would possess the right to be left in undisturbed enjoyment.

This "individualistic" theory had done good work in its time. In the struggle for freedom represented by the English Revolution it had served as a philosophical background for the claims of the reforming party. In the hands of the political economists and utilitarian philosophers of the eighteenth century it assisted the work by which the mediæval industrial and political systems began to be transformed into something more consonant with modern requirements. More recently still it had proved its vitality by welding together a powerful party committed to "philosophical radicalism," with its programme of free government, free trade, free thought, and free exercise of public speech. But just at the time of which we are now speaking it had begun to show signs of decrepitude, and, instead of

supporting the cause of reform, to be turned against it. This reaction found its most powerful expression in the essays of Herbert Spencer afterwards published as *The Man versus the State*; the burden of which was, if not Paine's doctrine that "Society is the outcome of our needs, Government of our wickedness," yet that political organisation existed for definitely limited ends, and that the chief need of the time was to remind reformers that they had outrun their mandate, and to recall them to their true function of resisting the usurpations of the State over the natural rights of the individual.

There were few, probably, who believed that the great codes of factory, health and education Acts of these years were really signs of a "coming slavery." Most people felt vaguely that they represented rather the dawn of a new idea of social liberty. But there was sufficient obscurity in men's minds as to the conditions of progress, and more particularly as to the bearing of the new doctrine of biological evolution of which Spencer was the accredited interpreter,[1] to justify a certain

[1] What Mr L. T. Hobhouse says of the state of things at the beginning of the present century, viz. that there has been no sufficient protest against the doctrine of natural selection as the dominant principle in life, with the consequence that "what has filtered through into the social and political thought of the time has been the belief that the time-honoured doctrine 'Might is Right' has a scientific foundation in the law of biology" (*Democracy and Reaction*, p. 85), was true *a fortiori* of Green's time. What difference there is, is largely due to Green's political teaching, which included a deeper interpretation of the evolutionary doctrine than the "evolutionists" were able to extract from it. See D. G. Ritchie's *Principles of State Interference*, *Darwinism and Politics*, and *Darwin and Hegel*, Preface.

hesitation among reformers of all parties in accepting the guidance of their own deeper intuitions. The national spirit was thus divided against itself, and it appeared to Green, as to many, to be the main problem of philosophy, as important for practice as for theory, to find a basis of reconciliation.

WILL, NOT FORCE, THE BASIS OF THE STATE. —His solution of it was the application of the ideas with which we are already familiar to explain the true nature of social and political organisation. His chief political work[1] consists of two parts, in the first of which he tracks the individualistic fallacy through the main forms that it has taken in modern philosophy; in the second he develops his own theory in constructive form. It is with the general results, and more particularly with the formula in which he sums them up, that we are here concerned.

We have seen that the essence of human life, and thus the deepest purpose of the will, is to be found in the pursuit of an ideal of its own betterment, involving the betterment of the society of which each individual is only a part. The mistake of individualism had been that it took as its point of departure a conception of the will and of good

[1] *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, Works, vol. ii. "No other recent writer has the classical strength and sanity of Professor Green, who was never more thorough and more at home than when dealing with those questions affecting citizenship, in and for which it may be said he lived."—Professor Bosanquet in Preface to edition separately published in 1901.

as something merely personal and particular, with the result that law and social control in all its forms appeared in the light of a permanent menace to the free pursuit of individual ends. Starting from the opposite idea of the community of man's essential interests—the idea, as Green liked to call it, of a Common Good—we see the justification of the complete reversal of the perspective which he effected.

The society which is entrusted with the realisation of such an idea (and this is just what a society of any kind means) must by the very terms of its existence seek (unconsciously in the first instance, but with growing consciousness of its spiritual purpose as time goes on) to secure by political action the conditions that are prescribed by this end. Corresponding, therefore, to the chief objects of reasonable desire, the things that are of vital interest to human life, we shall have forms of social structure representing the permanence and continuity of social purpose. These forms we call generally "institutions." But they are not something set up from the outside, as to the individual who gathers himself together in a state of self-will and resentment they are apt to appear. Rather they are meeting points of wills that are in harmony with their own deeper meaning—precipitates of the common effort after fullness and harmony of life.

The relation that subsists between the external and internal, society and the individual, philosophers

have expressed in different ways. To Plato social institutions — *e.g.* that of classes — were features of the individual soul writ large.[1] Others have compared them to the scaffolding that society has thrown round itself for the support of the builders, others by a truer metaphor to the bone and tissue which the body secretes for the common service of its members in the performance of its vital functions. (But the most fruitful, because the truest, analogy is that of the habits of the individual himself.) Just as the results of physical, intellectual and moral effort are secured to a man, and further progress rendered possible by the formation of habits, so society falls into customs, adopts conventions, acquires institutions which represent at any particular time its actual achievements in its efforts after corporate good, and become under favourable circumstances the basis of further advance. (And just as at a certain stage of development habits obtain the stamp of conscious approval and are adopted as principles of life, so at a certain stage of civilisation societies establish written laws and empower governments in order to economise the labour of individuals, and carry out automatically what has received the stamp of social approval.)

It is true that laws and customs, like the habits of individuals, have their weak side, becoming under particular circumstances an obstruction to the free expansion of life, and temporarily justifying

[1] Green himself speaks of them as "the handwriting of ordinances."

the appeal from the "chains" of social ordinance to the inborn freedom of the individual. But this ought never to obscure the fundamental fact that in origin and idea institutions are the repositories of man's ideas of social good, and even at their worst much more frequently ossifications of outgrown purposes and ideals than forcible intrusions from without. And what is true of particular institutions is true of the State as a whole. The State is not something different from organised society, but merely the name which we give it at the stage of its development, at which it rises to the consciousness of its spiritual purposes and of the resources it possesses for their furtherance.

The fact that political as contrasted with domestic, economic or other forms of association holds in reserve an appeal to force has led theorists to fix upon this as its essential principle. But it is just here that the analogy of habit proves most helpful. We speak of the "force" of habit, and there are times when our habits become known to us as a forcible means of resisting the violence or inertia of brute nature. In just the same way we arm the State with the means of meeting force with force. But just as the *raison d'être* of habit is not to be sought for in the mere inertia of acquired tendency, so neither is the root of the authority of states and governments to be looked for in the force they have at their command, but in the end they serve as the proper "setting" of individual life, the condition

of the maintenance and development of free personality. It is reflections such as these that are summed up in Green's formula, "Will, not force, is the basis of the State."

EARLIER POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLAND. —*Prima facie* this view does not seem to be in any striking opposition to the earlier English theory. From the outset the main current of political philosophy in England (and herein consisted its strength as a unique contribution to social theory) had identified itself with the principle that the authority of government must rest ultimately upon the will of the governed. What distinguishes the doctrine here expounded is the conception of the nature of the will that underlies it. Hobbes (for he may be said to have spoken the first word of modern philosophy on the whole subject) started with the idea of a multitude of individual, personally independent wills. The problem which he set himself and his immediate successors was how to conceive of any government that had actually existed, or was likely to exist, as carrying with it the consent of such a multitude. The answer to it was found in the idea of an original contract in which individuals were conceived of as having renounced, either in whole or part, either temporarily or permanently, their claim to independent action in return for certain definite benefits without which human life, as we know or desire to know it, must cease to exist. Whatever germ of truth this doctrine contained,

and however its error was veiled by qualifications in detail, it was open to the fundamental objection that it was obliged to assume the existence in individuals in a non-social condition of notions of obligation and mutual rights which could only arise through the operation on them of an already organised society, and thus failed in the precise object for which it was invented—viz. the explanation of the rise of political union. In the particular forms in which it was worked out by different writers, this teaching involved further difficulties. Was the renunciation complete and permanent on the part of the citizens in favour of a single all-powerful sovereign as Hobbes tended to conceive of it? In this case, though the unity of will is preserved, it has ceased in any real sense to be the will of the people. Protest is rebellion, and rebellion unmitigated wrong, with the result that might has become right, and a theory invented to support an existing form of government can be turned with equal force to an argument in favour of its successor.[1] Was the renunciation, on the other hand, partial and temporary as conceived of by Locke? In that case it was impossible to lay down any clear principle on which obedience to an existing government, or indeed to government of any kind, could be represented as an obligation binding on the individuals. There was thus nothing to divide the cautious suggestions

[1] This was conveniently observed and acted on when the time arrived by the sagacious author of the *Leviathan*.

of British common-sense from the brilliant paradoxes of a Rousseau, or to prevent a theory put forward to justify a Reformation being utilised in the interest of a Revolution. In one form the Social Contract thus cancelled the right to reform in the other the duty of obedience.[1]

Green's doctrine, as above explained, in starting with a wholly different conception of the relation of the individual to society, meets these difficulties. Man is a social being from the first, not only in the sense that he craves as a lonely individual for social intercourse, but that his individual ends are only attainable in and through some form of social organisation. There is no need, therefore, to beg the question of the origin of social obligation. Man is moral from the beginning. The recognition of the right of others as members of the same society and the recognition of a right and a wrong for himself are not two separate things. They spring from the same root in the conception, however obscure, of a better self in the development of which the betterment of others is involved; they develop together as the individual's conception of the nature of the society on the well-being of which his own depends, and of the constituents of that well-being become clearer; finally, in the

[1] Professor Bosanquet points the contrast by the aphorism that Hobbes preserves the idea of will but sacrifices its generality, Locke preserves the idea of generality but sacrifices the idea of will. As above stated, both start from the idea of will, but in Hobbes it turns to despotism, in Locke to anarchy, and in both cases for the same reason that they both start with an "individualistic" conception of the nature of will.

fully-developed moral consciousness they are seen to be only different sides or to mark off different modes of applying the same principle. (It further enables him to set the doctrine of "natural rights" in a new light.) Instead of being conceived as an original endowment which had to be renounced in whole or in part, on entry into the political state, these must be understood as the rights that the notion of a perfected human nature prescribes as an ideal in the future. (It is through the action of organised society itself that we are able to conceive the notion of any such rights at all.) Their claim against the existing social order is not that of the more primordial in time against the later, but of the more developed and the fuller against the more elementary and the more schematic—in a word of the "idea" against the partial embodiment.

The proof of this account must, of course, be found in its power of setting in a true light the claims of the State over the individual and the less comprehensive forms of social organisation such as the family. (In the detailed exposition of the theory of right, Green is perhaps more convincing than in any other part of his philosophy.) To this we must return for particular illustration of the above abstract statement of his doctrine. But there are certain obvious objections suggested by the very terms that have been used, the discussion of which may here serve to bring its general tenor into clearer light.

MEANING OF GREEN'S THEORY.—The objection from the point of view of the ordinary citizen which Green himself[1] is at most pains to meet, is perhaps less likely to cause difficulty at the present time. Even the most restive and revolutionary social groups among ourselves are prepared to see in the general legal and conventional restraints under which we live conditions necessary for the public welfare, and therefore to regard them as on the whole an expression of fundamental social needs. A deeper objection is likely to suggest itself from the point of view of the student of history who, though he has discarded the theory of a social contract in favour of the axiom that "constitutions are not made but grow," has yet convinced himself that the chief factor in their growth is not will but "circumstances." "Does the account that the philosopher gives of the origin and meaning of human institutions," he will be inclined to ask, "really correspond with fact? Is he not by a species of anthropomorphism attributing to will what is really due to climate, situation, economic necessity—in a word, to the pressure of circumstances? What evidence is there in the institutions of a country like Russia or Portugal of the operation of anything that can be called the will of the people, or in the last resort of anything more than the mere brute force of geographical, industrial and other external conditions interacting with fixed features of inherited character? Great

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 121.

men, truly, there have been — men of will and leading, but they have led by themselves becoming the followers of circumstances whose trend they have had the genius to discern. When it was not their own personal glory, it was the glory of circumstances and not of any underlying moral and social will which they declared. Even where development has reached a point at which we are justified in speaking of the "will of the community" as an operative force in civilisation, what is this, after all, but the result of the compromises and makeshifts by which a multitude of individual and divergent wills manage under the pressure of economic and political necessity to act with some appearance of unity?" The answer to such an objection has to be gathered from the general spirit of Green's philosophy, and from particular passages in which he touches upon one or other of the points involved in it.

THE PLACE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.—Green was, of course, prepared to recognise the force of circumstances. One of his earliest essays was upon this subject,[1] and the striking *Lectures on the English Revolution*[2] were written with the express object of showing how the greatest concentration and purity of moral purpose may fail when they are dissociated from insight into the actual circumstances of the time.[3] On the other hand, it

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 3 foll. "To regard this vast environment merely as the workings of the human mind seems nearly as far from the truth as to regard ourselves as its creatures or slaves."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

[3] Another interesting illustration was furnished by events going on

seemed to follow from the general principles of his philosophy that there could be no ultimate distinction between will and circumstances when taken each in its widest sense. Different as they may appear to us, they cannot to the philosophical Idealist be other than different sides of a wider reality, which itself is only ultimately comprehensible when interpreted as itself a form of Will. So regarded what appears to us in the form of an outer or circumstantial world must be in reality what it is to the eye of faith "no independent existence, but a means through which his own mind is ever more communicated to him."[1]

But apart altogether from any question of an overruling Providence in things Green would have denied that the distinction between will and circumstances could be anything but a relative one. We speak of the circumstances of human life as contrasted with the "surroundings" of an animal or a thing, for the obvious reason that only those parts of our environment are, properly speak-

in Italy before his own eyes, where the idealism of Mazzini was working as a source of discord and weakness just because of its aloofness from the general tendency of feeling and event.

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 4. It is interesting to notice how this view of man's environment anticipated by philosophy has recently come to commend itself to some of the representatives of physical science. Speaking of the change effected by the rise of consciousness in man, Alfred Russell Wallace writes: "The whole universe in all its myriad forms, in all its intricacies of structure and motion, in all its marvellous beauty and inexhaustible utilities, in all its complex and mysterious laws and forces, become to him a vast schoolroom, furnishing the materials needed for the development of all his hitherto unused faculties, and for the gradual elevation of his intellectual and moral nature."—*Fortnightly Review*, Jan. 1908.

ing, circumstances which enter our lives with a call to us to recognise and understand them. Just as before recognition they may be said to be less than circumstances, after it they are more. In being recognised they have already taken on the impress of mind and will, and in doing so become related to our life as a whole in a way that forbids us thenceforth to treat them as a mere external influence impinging upon it with an independent moulding force of their own.

The application of these principles to the circumstances of the rise and development of the State may be said to constitute the main interest of his political teaching. (Circumstances on this view might be said to constitute the impulse or occasion, never the reason or the cause, of political union.) The cause lies deeper in the civic qualities which he agreed with Plato and Aristotle were man's "by nature"—features stamped upon his inward parts, bound therefore sooner or later to manifest themselves in the external forms that give them their purchase in the larger world.

And this truth becomes progressively obvious as civilisation itself develops and the centre of gravity moves from the physical to the social environment. Henceforth the influence of "circumstances" is rather that of the general over the particular will, the social over the individual purpose, than that of the external and purposeless over the internal and volitional. It is quite true, as the objection implies, that "physical"

wants form the original impulse, and are always an important element in civilisation. But we are apt to forget that these are *wants* directed to a certain form of well-being, that man's will is working in them, and that even from the outset they are only elements in the wider will of whose nature we have already spoken. To take a single instance: the institution of slavery as known to the ancient and modern world, may be said to have an economic basis: the slave was a "living tool," and held a place in civilisation so long as he was economically profitable. But it is easy to show that there were other factors in its origin, *e.g.* the incipient consciousness of a common humanity and the desire to be recognised and held in honour, and therefore that it represented more than the mere will to live on the part of the captor. It is easy, too, to show that though its economic unprofitableness was an element, perhaps a condition of its abolition, yet in the very recognition of this fact by the planter, still more in the plea of the philanthropist, will and idea took control of the movement that led to emancipation.

GREAT MEN.—Read in this light, too, it is not difficult to see that the work of the leaders of men is capable of quite a different interpretation from that which the objection puts upon it. Their part in the development of civilisation consists not so much in interpreting circumstances as a force external to man as in interpreting man's will

to himself. The great man is he who realises more clearly than others the existence and meaning of the deeper instincts of the nation or the race "that living will on 'which its dark foundations rest.'" In him man's deeper purposes, which are for most of us a "buried life," come to self-consciousness, or at least rise sufficiently near it to become immediate motives.

> "He knows the hills where his life rose,
> And the seas where it goes."

It is this that gives him his twofold aspect, as at once the exponent and the corrector of his age, the exponent of its rarer, the corrector of its commoner mind. Green's treatment of greatness, and the strange mixture of good and evil that it commonly involves, is always suggestive. He sums up his belief as to its true nature in a characteristic sentence upon the reformer from the essay just mentioned: "The very essence of a true reformer consists in his being the corrector and not the exponent of the common feeling of his day. The breath of his life is inspired from above, not drawn from below. The wants of the age or some unknown influences from above set the minds of thinking men in motion, they know not whither, till at last the master-mind among them reaches the wished-for light and reflects it on his fellows. Immediately they recognise it as that after which they have been striving, while the world at large finds its darkness broken, but knows not whence the light has come."[1]

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 10.

THE GENERAL WILL. — What holds of the man of genius holds of ordinary men in their better moments. It has often been noticed how at great crises in the history of a nation or society, or when it is stirred by some event of more than common significance, the veil of habit and of everyday obtuseness to the true values of things seems to be momentarily lifted, ordinary interests and animosities are forgotten, and the soul of a people stands revealed to itself. But it is not necessary to go for illustration to exceptional times and events. The deliberations of any parish council or village committee will often show in the result a disinterestedness and wisdom beyond anything that any individual has brought with him, or in his unaided counsels was capable of suggesting. Most (perhaps all) may have come with their upper consciousness preoccupied with some personal or sectional interest, but in the course of the discussion new issues emerge, wider interests are broached, a response comes from a deeper level of consciousness, things are seen in a new light and a decision ultimately arrived at which, while it does not fail to take account of all legitimate interests, does so in a way altogether different from that in which it was sought at the outset to enforce them.

It is facts like these that contain the answer finally to the objection that where, as in so-called popular government, laws and institutions are apparently the work of deliberate volition, they are in reality the result of a compromise which,

while by a kind of social contract it has the acquiescence of all, expresses the will of none.) It is quite true, as the above illustration shows, that (private interests are compromised or set aside.) But they are set aside not to make room for other interests equally private, and thus to arrive at a species of average satisfaction or dissatisfaction of all concerned, (but to give effect to a wider purpose which subordinates while it includes the narrower.)

(The general conclusion) to which we are thus brought is that while no interpretation of man's life can be sound, which disregards the force of circumstances as something far beyond the dispositions of his individual will, it is equally wide of the mark to conceive of civilisation in general—*à fortiori* of the form of social organisation represented by the State as the product of forces acting from without. Whether looked at from the point of view of general philosophical theory, or from the point of view of the actual historical process by which it has been achieved, it is only rightly interpreted when recognised as the product of a spirit working in man that is greater than himself, and that is building better than he knows.

THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS.—But the longer we dwell on this side of Green's doctrine, and the more closely we seek to connect his political ideas with the religious aspect of his teaching, the more difficult do we make it to understand the enthusi-

asm for reform which, as we have seen, was the breath of his public life. The theory that sees in law and government the ordinances of a divine Providence was not, of course, a new one. It may be said to have been the theory for which Socrates died.[1] It was the theory of Edmund Burke, with whom Green had much in common. More particularly it was the theory of Hegel from whom Green largely borrowed it. But in all of these thinkers it was combined with a spirit of devout and even enthusiastic conservatism. To understand how the view of the nature of human institutions associated in his spiritual predecessors with acquiescence, and even reaction, filled him with a divine discontent, we must turn to the other side of his teaching as it affected the rights of the individual.

His idea of political right in general follows from his conception of good as perfection of human character. That which is right (*jus*) is that which is demanded by this moral ideal: "what in the outward intercourse of men corresponds to the inviolability of the essential material conditions of moral humanity, *i.e.* to the idea of the existence and perfection of personality." Otherwise expressed, right is the system of the conditions by means of which the ethical whole is enabled to maintain and develop itself as an articulate system of separate members.[2] But, as these last words remind us,

[1] See Plato's *Crito*.

[2] See the definitions quoted in *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 214n.; cf. § 180n., 186n.

the ideal is one that has to be realised in individual centres, and when we speak of what is just or right, we do so in reference to the conditions required for this individual realisation — these conditions themselves being describable in the substantive form as the "rights" of the individual. A right has therefore two sides, a positive and a negative. From the positive side a right is the condition or sphere of self-realisation, from the negative it is that on which others are prohibited from encroaching. But this limit, the side from which the rights of one appear as the duties of another, is wrongly interpreted when it is conceived of as something accidental in the life of the other, or merely imposed on him from without. It follows from all that has already been said of the good of each as including the good of all, that (an encroachment by any one on the rights of another is in reality an act of violence against his own.) From this point of view it is no mere word-play to insist that it is not only "right" but "a right" of each to respect the right of another. If going to the root of the matter we ask on what the individual rights of each depend, the only answer in conformity with our previous conclusions is, that it cannot be on his mere existence as an individual mind and will, apart from what he has the mind and will to do. What endows the individual in the first instance with his rights, is his power of doing right—in other words, of contributing from his own particular centre to social

well-being. Where this is absent, as it is in the lower animals, or where it is undeveloped, as in children, or temporarily obscured, as in the insane or the criminal, rights are admitted only in a metaphorical or a secondary sense, corresponding to present analogies or the promise of what may hereafter be. Right is thus at every point relative to society. In origin, contents, and in the condition of its maintenance, it depends upon society. "It is on the relation to a society, to other men recognising a common good, that the individual's rights depend, as much as the gravity of a body depends on relations to other bodies."[1] From this it follows, that to assert individual right against society is to turn it against its own life. As Green puts it: "A right against society is a contradiction in terms."

With this conclusion as to the general nature of right we might seem to have drifted still further from the spirit of the reformer. But it is just here that we have the characteristic note of Green's doctrine of right. While there is no right to be free *from* society, there is a right in every individual to have the freedom *of* it. In the same breath, therefore, that he insists that there is no right against society, he proclaims the right to be treated as a member of society.[2] And it is just here again that the conditions under which the

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 99.

[2] "It is a right against society as *distinguished from a right to be treated as a member of society*" that is the contradiction.

moral order reveals itself in time, throw a responsibility on each succeeding generation.

While existing rights, the actual civic endowment of individuals, must be conceived of as the embodiment of a divine idea, yet at any moment of social development the full idea is far from realisation. It is only by a gradual process (though at an accelerated rate as it comes to be more fully understood) that this idea asserts itself against the obstructions which the necessities of a natural history, the inertia of custom, or the selfishness of established interests may have created. It is true that the established order which we call the State has a rightful, and in a sense a paramount claim over the individual in virtue of its being the condition of any *human* life whatsoever, but this is only on the assumption that it is a "State" indeed, an organisation that with whatever shortcoming has for its supreme object the fullest development of the rights of all its members. As Green puts it: "The claim of the state is only absolutely paramount on the supposition that in its commands and prohibitions it takes account of all the claims that arise out of human fellowship."[1] Where it fails to do so, and just in so far as it fails, the individual is in turn within his right in appealing, if not to a law of nature independent of society, yet to a law of nature presupposed in society however imperfectly expressed in its laws and institutions.

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 146.

While, therefore, Green rejects the appeal to a law of nature as conceived by Rousseau or Tom Paine, or even Kant, he was yet able to appeal to the conception itself as "the moving principle of the modern reconstruction in Europe."[1] It meant to him the idea of a human society which, while it preserved the general features that had rendered civilisation up to the present point possible, and had stood the test of experience, gave a far wider interpretation to what was necessary if human life were ever to attain the fullness to which in divine Providence he conceived it to be destined.

In this sense he was prepared to advocate the rights of man, but they were not the rights of man *versus* the State, but the rights of a better form of State against a worse. And this carried with it an all-important consequence, seeing that, when read in this way, the question of right merged with that of duty. There is no sense, he writes, in asking what gives individuals a right to resist society, "unless we suppose a wrong done to society in their persons, and then it becomes a question not of right merely, but of duty."[2]

In the light of these ideas, Green could not fail to see in the condition of the vast majority of those in whom a Christian society professed to recognise the rights of citizenship, not only a massive obstruction to their own self-development, but a source of degradation and impoverishment

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 296.

[2] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 107.

to the civilisation from which they were excluded. It was the conviction of the gulf that separated herein our ideal from our practice, and of what might be done to bridge it by an enlightened system of legal enactment that was the source of his political enthusiasm. To him reform did not mean the triumph of one class or political party over another, but the development of the idea of what the social union could be made to mean for all—one more step in the long process by which the civilisation of Christendom was to be achieved and its divine purpose realised.

ILLUSTRATION FROM THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY.—In Green's treatment[1] of the institution of private ownership we have an epitome of his whole political teaching, and the best concrete illustration of his general doctrine of embodied will.

In the essential realism of property—in the materiality and fixity of the things that are possessed, we might appear to have the very antithesis of idealism in all its forms. More particularly in the forcible manner in which property has been acquired, and the apparently accidental and unreasonable proportion of its distribution, we seem to see the disproof of the doctrine that will and not force is the basis of the State. To obtain a clear view of the true nature of the institution, we have, in the first place, to take it in its widest acceptation as the

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, c. xiv. (N.).

individual appropriation for the purposes of life in general, of material objects of any kind, or (what amounts to the same thing) of their properties; in the second place, we have to recognise the distinction (at all times important in dealing with human affairs) between fact and value, between the way in which a thing has come into existence, together with the form that it takes, and the purpose that is served by it. It is to the narrowness with which the idea of private property is commonly conceived, and to the failure to distinguish between historical form and ethical value, that the chief errors of popular discussions of the subject are due. Because property as a whole has begun in uncovenanted appropriation, or because some particular form of property has been abused, the institution itself is denounced as based upon injustice.

Taking it in its widest sense. and setting aside the questions of the origin and different historical forms of ownership, which, however illuminating and important, belong strictly to another study, what, we have to ask, is the meaning of property for human life as a whole, what does it imply in the individual, and in the society of which he is a part? Green's whole doctrine is summed up in two points which admit of succinct, and, after what has been already said, from his point of view convincing statement.

1. Property is more than seizure and appropriation of an object for the supply of a passing need. Even a store laid up for future need is not

necessarily property. Appropriation in both these forms is possible for the lower animals, in which we recognise no rights of property. Property as a human institution implies in a particularly striking form the idea of the distinction between a permanent self and its passing state, which we have seen to lie at the foundation of man's whole intellectual and moral nature. It "implies the conception of himself on the part of the appropriator as a permanent subject for whose use as instruments of satisfaction and expression he takes and fashions certain external things." The proprietor must be able to say of it, "This shall be mine to do as I like with, to satisfy my wants, and express my emotions as they arise."

So conceived of property stands for the more permanent and stable elements of a man's personality, like the body itself, of which it is merely an extension in place and time, a part of the "constant apparatus through which he gives reality to his ideas and wishes." In this we have its rationale. Just as it is in and through the use of his body that a man first realises his personality as at once an individual and a member of a social whole, so it is through the extension of it in private property that the further development of personality in all its higher phases of producer, distributer, discoverer, testator, is rendered possible.

If it be argued that primitive civilisation in which private ownership is unknown, and land

and the instruments of production are held in common, offers no support to such a theory, the answer is, that this is to misunderstand the facts.

Common ownership in early societies is not the denial of a man's private property in the products of his own labour, but the only way under the circumstances of securing it. "The characteristic of primitive communities is not the absence of the distinction between *meum* and *tuum*, without which no society of intelligent agents would be possible at all, but the common possession of certain materials, in particular land, on which labour may be expended. It is the same common interest which prevents the separate appropriation of these materials, and which secures the individual in the enjoyment and use of that which his labour can extract from them."

While at one stage of civilisation the clan or village ownership of land, praised by communistic writers, undoubtedly represented the condition of rendering industry its due, at another it represented an arbitrary limit, both of the society whose recognition is the condition of any kind of property, and of the forms of property which it is socially beneficial to recognise. In order that the power of acquisition may serve its purpose as a means to moral freedom, "the range of appropriation must be extended; it must include more of the permanent material on which labour may be expended, and not merely the passing products of

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 218.

labour spent on unappropriated material; and they must be at once secured and controlled in it by the goodwill, by the sense of common interest of a wider society: in other words, by the law written or unwritten of a free state."[1]

2. This brings us to the second condition of the existence of property, viz. the "recognition by others of a man's appropriations as something which they will treat as his, not theirs, and the guarantee to him of his appropriations by means of that recognition." What, asks Green, is the ground of this recognition? He finds it, as he found the ground of the State in general, in the will. And if there seems to be an even more pronounced paradox in this than in the more general statement, the explanation is given in the same line of thought. By will is not meant "the momentary spring of any and every spontaneous action, but a constant principle operative in all men qualified for any form of society however frequently overborne by passing impulses, in virtue of which each seeks to give reality to the conception of a well-being which he necessarily regards as common to himself with others." True, as we have seen, property has too often seemed to represent nothing more than the strong hand. Its actual maintenance, moreover, even in the most highly civilised communities, calls for the constant application of force—a circumstance that has given rise to the theory that the State mainly,

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 219, condensed.

if not exclusively, exists for its protection. But force is not of the essence of property any more than of the State. It is not the power of forcible tenure but the power of utilisation for social ends that is the ground of the permanent recognition that constitutes a right to property. Where this is absent possession must be, and continue to be, robbery; where it once may have been, but has ceased any longer to be, tenure may remain, but it remains as a mere survival, rightly liable at any moment to be challenged in the interest of the community, whose will has made and is necessary to sustain it.

The particular forms of possession that have thus become ossified in the course of history and constitute a challenge to the reformer is not a question in this lecture. We are dealing here with general principles, and the condition of classes and individuals in relation to established embodiments of the common will. The general principle is, that property in its idea is a means (so far as can be seen, a necessary means) to the highest moral development. From this it follows for a philosophy which sees the end of political action in "the emancipation of the individual from all restrictions upon the free moral life, and his provision with means for it," that the aim of legislation can never at any time be either the mere conservation of existing rights of property, or the mere substitution of common for individual ownership. The aim of the reformer must always be the

twofold one of the extension to each and all of the opportunity of self-development and self-expression that the ownership of "means" affords, and the penetration of property in all its forms by a sense of responsibility to the social end which is served by the self-development of individuals. "The rationale of property," in Green's condensed summary, "is that every one should be secured by society in the power of getting and keeping the means of realising a will which in possibility is a will directed to social good."[1]

Looking out on the conditions of the people in all European countries in the 'seventies, Green could not fail to be profoundly impressed with the contrast between ideal and actuality. "The actual result of the development of rights of property in Europe as part of its general political development has so far been a state of things in which all indeed *may* have property, but great numbers, in fact, cannot have it in that sense in which alone it is of value, viz. as a permanent apparatus for carrying out a plan of life for expressing ideas of what is beautiful, or giving effect to benevolent wishes."[2]

Green yielded to none in the "sacred indignation" with which he viewed so apparently abortive a result of our civilisation. He differed, as we shall see, from the more revolutionary school of reformers in his analysis of the causes, and in the direction in which he held that a remedy was to be sought.

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 220. [2] *Ibid.*

LECTURE IV

IDEALISM AND POLITICS

Idealism and Democracy — State interference—Socialism—Idealism and Empire—Conclusion.

GREEN called himself in politics a "Liberal by conviction," and he has recently had an honourable place assigned to him by Professor MacCunn in his fine portrait gallery of Radical Thinkers; but the emphasis, in his case at least, is upon the thinking. He was a philosophical radical, and even here he differed from the men to whom the term is usually applied in using his philosophy rather as a point of view from which the best in all parties might be regarded than as the basis of a programme for any one particular party. In the same spirit I propose to select as illustrations of his practical attitude one or two problems of politics which may be said to be either no longer or not yet a ground of party contention.

IDEALISM AND DEMOCRACY.—I have already dwelt on his whole-hearted acceptance of the modern spirit as pledged to the ideal of enlightened freedom and enjoyment. That in face of the right to understand, to be free, to enjoy, any large class should continue to exist imprisoned

in crass ignorance, and without the opportunity or capacity for rational enjoyment, seemed to him the condemnation of our present civilisation. He would have echoed Carlyle's saying: "That one man should die ignorant who has the capacity of knowledge, *that* I call a tragedy, though it should happen, as by some computations it does, a thousand times a minute." He had no false sentiment about the proletariat. "A proletariat could be nothing else in his eyes but an index of the failure of civilisation."[1] To this conviction was due his enthusiasm for higher education among all classes, at a time when few had risen above the idea of the three "rs" and a smattering of technical instruction as the suitable measure for the working population. He had an old-fashioned affection for the phrase, the "education of a gentleman." Like his hero Cromwell, he "loved a gentleman that was so indeed," conceiving of him, if not as one who "knew what he was fighting for, and loved what he knew," at any rate as one who possessed definite capacities of knowledge and emotion, access to which, instead of being the privilege of a few, ought to be the acknowledged right of all. Hence he was a pioneer in school reform, holding that the line of progress was in the extension of the principles of 1870 to a wider circle of schools, and to the training colleges, combined with the grading of secondary schools. He ends one of his addresses on this subject with the fine sentence:

[1] MacCunn, *op. cit.* p. 250.

"As it was the aspiration of Moses that all the Lord's people should be prophets, so with all seriousness and reverence we may hope and pray for a condition of English society in which all honest citizens will recognise themselves and be recognised by each other as gentlemen."

To him this hope was a beacon in all his social efforts. Those who were undergraduates in Balliol in the early 'seventies will remember the Temperance Public House and Evening School he started with the aid of some of them in St Clement's. It was a small thing, but derived significance from being an early anticipation of the larger movement now represented in all parts of the world by the University Settlement, which owes its original inspiration, if not its actual inception, to Green. The first University Settlement bore with justice the name of Arnold Toynbee, but the ideas, as Toynbee always acknowledged, were those of Green. We have already seen what "institutions" in general meant to him. The "Settlement," had he lived to see its spread, would have been an institution after his own heart. The manifest creation of the better will, which is also the will for social betterment, it stands for a permanent opportunity of personal service; and, like other institutions the spirit of whose origin is still fresh upon them, is fitted to become to its members what he would not have hesitated to call with something of its old pregnancy of meaning a "means of grace," returning to them in

knowledge and insight, in opportunities of wider friendship, and in the extension of sympathy—in a word, in "social will" far more than it receives from them.

In all this he may be said only to have given a more practical turn to the gospel that Carlyle had preached for half a century. He was merely voicing the democratic claim for equality in the only form in which it represents a claim to justice.[1] But Green had penetrated further into the spirit of life than had Carlyle, and in doing so had penetrated further into the spirit of democracy. He saw that equality was impossible without liberty both individual and civil. Liberty was essential, not only as the older radicals taught as a means to equality, but as a part of it.

The "opportunity" which was to be equalised was the opportunity not merely to *have* and to be happy, but to *do* and to realise. Hence to the claim for equality Green added the claim for liberty—again in the only sense in which it could be of any value: "the right of a man to make the best of himself." Herein he joins hands, as Mr Hobhouse[2] points out, with the teaching of Mill in his great *Essay on Liberty*. When, however, Mr Hobhouse goes on to claim that Mill's argument cuts deeper, seeing that Green fails to meet the vital question, who is the judge, himself

[1] He would have retained the phrase "equality of opportunity" in spite of Dr Rashdall's recent criticism of it. (See *The Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. i. p. 232.)

[2] *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 224. L. T. Hobhouse, 1904.

or another, what is best for him, he forgets the express and striking statement of his creed that Green has himself given us. I have no wish to belittle Mill, for whom Green, in spite of philosophical differences, had the deepest reverence.[1] But in this respect the great utilitarian apostle of liberty had no advantage over the idealist philosopher. Speaking of the Reform Act of 1867 Green said: "We who were reformers from the beginning always said that the enfranchisement of the people was an end in itself. We said, and we were much derided for saying so, that only citizenship makes the moral man; that only citizenship gives that self-respect which is the true basis of respect for others, and without which there is no lasting social order or real morality." Only by the vote, as he elsewhere explained, can the instinctive loyalty of the ordinary good subject be turned into intelligent citizenship, and thence, again, at a higher level into enthusiastic patrotism. "Only thus will a man learn to regard the work of the State as a whole, and to transfer to the whole the interest which otherwise his particular experience would lead him to feel only in that part of its work which goes to the maintenance of his own and his neighbour's rights."[2] In the substance of their teaching there is nothing to choose between them. The difference is that

[1] He once said he would rather have been Mill than Carlyle, "he seems to have been such an extraordinarily *good* man."

[2] Works, vol. iii. p. 436.

to Mill the doctrine came rather as an afterthought, with no obvious connection with the happiness theory of which he was the recognised exponent—like a bit of true Gothic let into the ordinary popular renaissance or modern ricocco structure—while in Green it was an organic part of his whole philosophy springing from it as an arch from the supporting pillars.

To the reformer of to-day to whom this doctrine itself does not appear a commonplace, it is apt to appeal with diminished force. We have become painfully conscious of the failings, some would say, the failure of democracy; and progressive thinkers, looking as they pride themselves beyond the means to the end, have shown a tendency to lay the emphasis on organisation and efficiency of administration to the comparative neglect of the older democratic ideal. This has recently shown itself in foreign politics in a certain impatience with the obstructions offered to Western European ideals by the slowness and obtuseness of less advanced communities—entering at least as one factor into the circumstances that led to the South African War.

At home it has taken the form of a growing readiness to transfer the responsibility of government to paid officials, and to strengthen the machine at the expense of its temporary administrators. This is, indeed, a necessity of the situation, and within proper limits is entirely good and useful. But its utility may easily be exaggerated so as

to obscure the real ends of government. It is easy to imagine a combination of all the talents, directed with entire disinterestedness, taking the place of present blundering attempts at self-government. But would the result be in reality better, would it be the "end" which we desire?

Mr Hobhouse, who in the book already referred to discusses the question with admirable lucidity, has given us the answer: "Self-government with all its defects implies a recognition of the duties of government and the rights of the people; it postulates a measure of personal freedom and of equal consideration for all classes. It is the natural instrument of a growing sense of social solidarity and the appropriate organ of a stirring national life. In a word, it is the political expression of the idea of Right on which the modern State rests, and if there be any other mode of government which would maintain that idea equally well, it has yet to be produced." This I believe to be gospel-truth, but it is truth which the writer owes, I venture to think, to Green, and not to Mill.

State Interference.—It is hardly necessary to dwell at any length on Green's teaching on this head after what has been already said. We have seen how his conception of the nature of liberty carried him at once beyond the suspicion of State interference, which was a tradition of the popular philosophy of his time. Progress in the early part of the century was rightly identified with

liberation from many obstructive forms of central control. But this was only one side of true liberal legislation.

Freedom means self-determination, but its value to its possessor depends altogether on what the self determines to do. A man's right to liberty is not a right to do what he likes with what society permits him to call his own, but to make the best of himself; and to secure this right for each and all may involve a far larger measure of control over particular individuals and classes than has become apparent to the classes themselves, or to those who look at society through their spectacles. True, there is an obvious limit to what the State can do for any individual. Granted that the end for all is, as Green defines it, "the free exercise of human faculties," there is much that the law can do to secure "the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible"; it obviously cannot secure the end itself. But this limitation is not imposed upon the State by anything external to it, or to its own idea, as the supporter of natural rights believed. The limit is self-imposed in the sense that it is implied in the very nature of the end which the State exists to secure.

The phrase that Green chose in order to express the function of the State as so limited was "the removal of obstacles" to the free exercise of capacity. But, seeing that the obstacles may come from within as well as from without, seeing

that they may be the result not only of the ignorance, the inertia, or the selfishness of others, but also of the same habits in a man's self, the phrase has to be interpreted in a liberal sense.[1] Green himself was more afraid that too little than that too much in the way of constructive interference with existing rights should be attempted by the legislature. In two respects especially he thought that the older view of freedom was still acting to the detriment of the material and moral well-being of the community, in ways of which the State was bound to take cognisance, viz. in the system of landed proprietorship and in the sale of intoxicating liquor. Both of these happen at the present time to be burning questions on which it may be safer here to refrain from entering. One thing, however, may be said. If there is a change in the spirit in which these questions are being approached, if all parties alike admit in words at least, that the "health of the people is the supreme law," against which no appeal to merely individual or sectional "rights" can be permitted to stand, it is in large part owing to the teaching of Green and the philosophy which first established on a sure basis of theory the principle that to argue against any reform however drastic, that it was an interference with individual liberty, "was to

[1] Professor Bosanquet has tried to render Green's meaning by the phrase, "hindrance of hindrances," but it is doubtful whether once the protest has been clearly made against "grandmotherly," which may easily turn into stepmotherly legislation, any purpose is to be served by the attempt to keep within the lines of negative description.

ignore the essential condition under which alone every particular liberty can rightly be allowed to the individual—the condition that the allowance of it was not an impediment to social good."[1]

So completely, indeed, has this idea won the day that already there is an old-world air about the whole controversy as to the right, and even as to the limits of State interference with any of the actions of individuals. There is a general admission that liberty is no fixed quantity which necessarily diminishes as corporate control increases, but that it is a growing function to which wisely-directed legislation may continually contribute. The idea, we may say, of a fixed liberty-fund has gone the way of the wage-fund, the work-fund and other similar metaphysical and mischievous theories. The centre of political interest at the present day has shifted to the different and more definite issue of the general type of social and industrial order that is most favourable to social liberty in the new and positive meaning of the word; more specifically to the question of the consonance of the control of land and of capital by individuals or private associations with the material and moral well-being of the people as a whole. The question that the philosophic student of politics is more likely to ask is the bearing of the ideas with which we have been occupied on the meaning and prospects of the growing movement that is founded on the belief in the

[1] Works, vol. iii. p. 384.

fundamental inconsistency between private ownership of capital and social liberty.

SOCIALISM.—Green nowhere submits Socialism to the same searching criticism which he applies to the theory from which Individualism drew its strength. We are therefore left to gather what his treatment of it would have been from the general bearing of his philosophy and from one or two isolated passages on particular points.

We may start from a distinction between different senses of the word, which has been suggested by some of those who may be taken as followers of his teaching.[1]

1. If we take it to mean (as it ought to) the doctrine of the reality of the social will (the desire for a good that is common to all), as the deepest practical principle in human life, Green's teaching may be said to be rootedly socialistic. With the motto of early English Socialism, chosen for it on the death of its founder by his friends: "It is the one great and universal interest of the human race to be cordially united, and to aid each other to the full extent of their capacities"[2]—he would have entirely agreed. He merely differs from its popular exponents in seeking to establish the sentiment it expresses in a sure foundation of philosophical theory.

2. If we pass from this which we might call

[1] Particularly by Professor Bosanquet in *Civilisation of Christendom*, c. x.

[2] On Robert Owen's grave in Newport Churchyard, Shropshire.

Moral Socialism, "the view that makes society the moral essence of the individual,"[1] to what we might call Revolutionary Socialism, the bearings are equally clear. Green would have agreed with the now generally accepted formula that progress must be by evolution, not revolution He would merely have differed from those who make glib use of the phrase in the depth of meaning he would have attached to it, and the seriousness with which he would have accepted the responsibilities it implies. To him it would have meant that little is to be hoped for from a reforming zeal which regards itself as a new and solitary witness to the power of the spirit. It was, as we have seen, a rooted principle in Green's philosophy that from the beginning and everywhere a spirit has worked in human society forming and re-forming institutions so as more fully to express man's better mind. We only require to look a little way below the surface to see that while there is much in human nature that is mere survival of the tiger and the ape, much in human environment, both physical and social, that is imperfectly subdued to the service of the spirit, there are yet enormous positive assets that mark out the course by which we have come, and point to the goal that is set before us and the lines of progress towards it.

We have already seen how he applied this idea to the case of private property. Whatever the changes (and these, he would have admitted, may

[1] Bosanquet, *op. cit.*

be of quite indefinite extent) in the forms of property and in the conditions of its tenure, that may be required in the interest of national economy and moral well-being, none are likely to be permanent or to represent real progress which shall have for their result either a diminished security of the fruits of individual labour or a restricted command by individuals over the means of carrying their ideas into execution, or giving expression to their better emotions. This is the condemnation of pure Communism, but it is passed not in the name of any abstract rights of the individual, but of the right of the community itself to the best that individuals can contribute through the free and spontaneous exercise of their powers of self-expression.

As it condemns the destruction of property in the interest of the community, so Green's Idealism condemns the destruction of nationality in the interest of humanity. In the national movement of the earlier part of his own century he saw a real gain to civilisation—the overruling by Providence of personal ambition masquerading in the guise of an abstract humanitarianism. In the same spirit he would have criticised the internationalism of the early socialists, and would have applied to their ideal Aristotle's profound remark upon Plato's proposals that "the parts which are to constitute a single organic whole must be different in kind." He would agree with the saner Socialism that has come to see in the life of a nation "a precious vessel that contains a priceless ointment easily

destroyed, and once destroyed, never to be replaced."[1]

Like property and nationality, the modern ideal of the family expresses a fundamental element in social good. Property, as we saw, is founded on the "effort on the part of the individual to give reality to a conception of his own good as a whole, or as something permanent in distinction from the mere effort to satisfy a need as it arises." The family is founded on a like capacity with the addition that in the conception of his own good is included a conception of the well-being of others connected with him by natural ties as something over and above and altogether distinct from the satisfaction of passing desires.[2]

The history of the institution is the history of the process whereby family rights have come to be regarded, in the first place, as independent of special tribal custom, and as inherent in human beings as such; and, secondly, as existing between *persons* and as throughout reciprocal. That the full realisation of these ideals is only possible on a monogamous basis involving, among other things, the suppression of all forms of slavery and the concubinage to which slavery constitutes a standing temptation, was one of Green's profoundest convictions. "The principles (1) that all men and all women are entitled to marry and form households, and (2) that within the household the claims

[1] Speech at Socialistic Congress at Essen, 1907. Quoted from memory.

[2] Works, vol. ii. p. 539.

of the husband and wife are throughout reciprocal, cannot be realised without carrying with them not merely monogamy, but the removal of these faulty relations between men and women which survive in countries where monogamy is established by law."[1] From this it followed that any scheme which in the name of progress sought to break up the unity of the family—that "unity in all interests and for the whole of a lifetime" which he held to be the ideal of this relation—not only was a reversal of the order of historic evolution, but a betrayal of the purpose which has given history a meaning.

The work of the reformer is not to destroy but to fulfil the idea of the family and the home by making it a real possibility for all. For this reason he would probably have viewed with grave distrust such proposals as those which have recently been put forward by Mr H. G. Wells and others for the "economic independence" of married women. He would have seen in them not the corollaries of socialistic principles, but proof of imperfect emancipation from an individualism which was founded on the denial of the reality and power of any higher forms of personality than the merely bodily self.

3. Passing from moral and revolutionary to the Economic Socialism which is more familiar in popular discussion at the present time, while it would be a mistake to identify this form of it with any particular view of the course of history, yet in its actual beginnings, both in England[2] and on

[1] Works, vol. ii. p. 54. [2] See Podmore's *Life of Robert Owen*, ch. x.

the Continent, it owed its hold to the conviction that the capitalistic system was responsible for the condition of the working classes in the first quarter of the century, and that no permanent improvement was possible so long as this continued. This view seemed to Green to be superficial. He maintained that it was unjust to attribute to the growth of the new industry effects which were the result of much more complicated causes, and had their roots, so far at least as England was concerned, far back in the history of the people and its government. More particularly he pointed to the series of events by which the labourer and the peasant proprietor had been driven from the land, and by massing in the towns were ready to become food for machinery, and to the slowness with which the community had come to realise at once its responsibility and the conditions under which it was possible effectively to assist them in their struggle towards an improved standard of life. With regard to the first he held that "landless countrymen whose ancestors were serfs were the parents of the proletariate of great towns," and with regard to the second, that there was little to be hoped for from government action alternately directed by a policy of a pauperising communism and a no less disastrous *laissez-faire*. A new era would open for reform when the true nature of the problem and the duty of the State to bring the whole of its resources to bear upon the solution

of it in the interest of all classes alike should be clearly discerned and frankly recognised.

Reviewing the work of the previous generation from the point of view of the situation as thus defined, he felt that in spite of the hesitancy and vacillation of political parties, a substantial foundation had been laid in the reform of the poor law, the removal of restrictions on trade-unionism, and working-class combinations, in the protective legislation of which the long series of factory Acts was the type, and in the education Act of the early 'seventies. The general movement which these represented had already resulted in a marked advance in the whole standard of comfort and manner of living of the great class of skilled mechanics — effectively disproving the contention of the early socialists that no permanent improvement was possible under the capitalistic *régime*, and entirely altering the problem as it faces ourselves. While there was still a boundless vista of needed reform, particularly as concerned the lower classes of labour, the uncertainty of employment and the security of life in general, it was even then clear, as it has since become clearer still, that the upper ranks of labour have passed into a new world. With Sir Charles Booth he "would have believed, and been glad to believe, that this class had reached firm footing in all forms of co-operation and combination, and that it held its future in its own hands."[1] So far as it was

[1] *Labour and Life of the People*, vol. i. p. 51.

concerned, the immediate question was far more one of the use to which it was prepared to put its improved circumstances than of any wide-reaching change in the organisation of society. The present system of administration offered no insurmountable obstacle, but, on the contrary, every opportunity of promoting better general, industrial and artistic education, the reattachment of the agricultural population to the land, and all forms of social and industrial organisation through which the will for a human and common as opposed to a merely animal and private good expresses itself, and so assisting in the formation of the type of character on which the right use of the new opportunities depends.

Nor was there any reason to believe that the same methods that had worked so striking an improvement in the higher ranks would be less effective in dealing with the economic position of the lower ranks of industry. The problem, truly, was different. Since Green's time the emergence into clearness of the problem of home work and sweated industries, of seasonal trades and unemployment, has brought home to us the probability that more drastic applications of these methods, more inquisitorial and providential "interference," more elemental and practical forms of education, a more differential and selective treatment of the various types of economic unfitness may be necessary. But if society is prepared fearlessly to face its responsibilities in the light of past experience, and

with a clear consciousness of the ideal at which it aims, as a form of *will* to which the increase of physical comfort and the release from avoidable economic uncertainty are merely a first and elementary condition, it may well leave the question of the particular form of industrial organisation best suited to millennial existence to settle itself when the time arrives. To insist upon the complete "propaganda," the creed, the whole creed, and nothing but the creed, as the test of political communion, can only have the effect of dividing and weakening the forces on which we have to rely for the next great instalment of social reform. On the other hand, the fragments of the socialist faith that are apt to find their way into parliamentary programmes, and to form the actual bond of the labour party itself—State limit of hours of employment, minimum wage, old age pensions, poor law administration, including methods of dealing with unemployment — are pre-eminently matters to be treated apart from doctrinaire economics in the light of a true social ideal and of the best available experience.

On these and other practical problems it would be pedantic to seek for guidance in the deductions from abstract philosophical principles. Yet ideas like Green's will serve a useful purpose if they help to remind us that indispensable though a beginning in some of these directions may be, the surest way to the end is not always what seems the shortest, and that it would be easy to adopt

measures of immediate relief that would have the result of lowering the tone and relaxing the working energy of the permanent organs of progress. To take a single example which seems likely to form a battle-ground in the immediate future. No one who feels the pressure of industrial disorganisation on those who are most helpless to protect themselves against it can fail to understand the attraction of proposals to throw upon the State the responsibility of finding work for the unemployed. But no one who has faced the problem with the requisite detachment and with an eye to all its bearings can fail also to be struck with the danger which the acceptance of it would involve not only to industry in general, from whose disorganisation the weaker industrial units would be the first to suffer, but to every kind of combination and co-operative effort, whether voluntary as in the trade-union, or municipal as in the labour bureau, which rests in any part on the desire to meet in a spirit of courage the contingencies of working life as a whole. Labour organisations have had their enemies, and severe blows have recently been aimed at them, but it is doubtful whether their worst enemies, without intending it, are not those who seek by providing soft options for membership of a society or connection with other character-forming institutions to undermine the claim they have on the support of the working classes.

While keeping, therefore, an open mind as to

what the future may bring forth in respect to the development of new forms in the ownership and administration of land and capital, and of the nature and amount of the aid that the State and the Municipality may be able to offer in the development of a higher standard of life in all classes of workers, Green would probably have directed his main efforts as a politician, had he lived, to securing a concentration of progressive purpose, inspired by the ideal of more fully-developed human capacity, upon some such programme as that sketched above. To this he would have summoned fellow-workers, not only in the name of temporal betterment or of better adaptation of society to its terrestrial environment, but in the name of a life whose time-order is only one aspect (perhaps a superficial one) of its real nature, and whose outlook is not bounded by any merely earthly existence.

With such a union in view I can conceive of him addressing at the present crisis a concordat to all classes of active reformers, liberal and radical, moderate and progressive, religious and secular, and more particularly to individualists and socialists. To the individualist it would say: "By all means hold to the moral individualism which is the counterpart of the moral socialism we have spoken of. Individual character is the bed-rock —the one thing that is needful. But remember, too, that character, particularly in its early formations, is a sensitive and delicately responsive thing.

Environment exercises an enormous influence upon it. Environment, moreover, is itself enormously controllable, and in these days we have made enormous strides in learning how to control it. See, therefore, that no individualistic shibboleths, or the ghosts of shibboleths, frighten you out of the courageous and consistent use of the most effective means of moulding it to your purpose that civilisation has put into your hands — the modern state and municipality."

To the socialist it would say: "By all means preach the influence of circumstance and the power and duty of the organised community to mould it to the highest ends. If you like, and you understand what it means, teach as a part of this the collective control of the means of production. But never forget that the highest and only real end or good is a form of will and character, and that this is something that can never in strict sense be given from without. The community may open up to each the way to achieving it for himself. It is pledged by the Grace and the human effort in the past that have brought it into being to nothing less on behalf of each and all in the time to come. But if its gifts are such as to fail to call out the energy needed to turn them to truly human ends, they will serve merely to hinder the object it has in view. Socialism, or as much of it as you deserve and as is good for you, will come sure enough with the spread of the social will. When it tries to outrun the available supply

of enlightened public spirit it only courts disaster like a column in battle that outruns its base."

To both it would say: "Remember withal that in politics as in life, where the end, as here it would seem, is the same, common-sense and common charity can carry people a long way together, Remember that your opponent is more than in his war-paint you take him to be — the individualist more than a capitalist, or the friend of the capitalist; the socialist more than an agitator, or the dupe of agitators. This is not to say merely that he is a good fellow, though he is likely enough to be that, too; but to say that, wanting at bottom to do right, he knows in his heart that life at the best is a complicated business, and that he is in mortal doubt as to what in particular it is right to do. And this means that underneath your differences, whether in inherited instinct or in formed opinion, there is working a principle (perhaps a Will like the best part of your own) leading you by ways that you do not clearly understand to a good that is greater than you know."

IDEALISM AND EMPIRE.—But to many these questions may seem to be of secondary and somewhat parochial interest as compared with the larger political issues which in the last quarter of a century have opened to our view. The really important phenomenon in our own time, it may be held, is the breakdown of the ideal of national commonwealths which dominated the middle part

of last century and the rise of the conviction that the future lies with the great world-wide empires. With this the most pressing problem has come for us to be the possibility of an Empire which shall also be a State in any real sense of the word. Can communities widely separated by the sea, with different social ideals, and with the constant reminder before them of their individual geographical unity and the possibilities of internal development, feeling in their veins the instincts and the energy of independent personality, be permanently welded together under the sense of a common good represented by a central government? This is not a question merely of colonies that have sprung from a common stock, speaking the same language, owning allegiance to the same moral and religious tradition, cherishing the same pride in the military, literary, artistic, political achievements of the British race, but of many divergent nationalities united by no bond but subjection to a distant, to multitudes scarcely imaginable government. Have the ideas which we have been examining, it may be asked, any application here? Have they anything to teach us? It is this and not any merely "social" bearing that must be the test of their political value.

Green taught at a time at which the "problem of empire" was just beginning to be realised. Seeley's *Expansion of England* was not published till a year, Froude's *Oceana* till three years after his death. There was, moreover, much in his own

political instincts, particularly in his admiration for John Bright and his antipathy to the policy of Palmerston and Disraeli, that tended to blind him to its significance. On the other hand, his attitude to the American War, in which he ardently supported the North, to the demand for Polish independence which he "took to be an impossibility," and to the maintenance of the Union with Ireland and its pacification by good rule which he held to be possible and necessary, showed how little sympathy he had with separatist proposals founded on abstract theories of liberty. For the existence of political union he held it to be essential "not, indeed, that every one subject to the laws should take part in voting them, still less that he should consent to their application to himself, but that it should represent an idea of common good which each member of the society can make his own so far as he is rational."

On these slight indications it would be improper to attempt to deduce definite teaching on the *Welt-Politik* of the present day, but I should fail of the intention of these lectures if I did not try to indicate the general bearing of the view of life for which he stood upon its main problems.

On the meaning of our Empire in general it is not, I think, difficult to see what his Idealism implies. I have myself tried to interpret it in the light of similar ideas.[1] Starting from the distinction between questions of origin and of right,

[1] "The Meaning of Imperialism" (*Fortnightly Review*, August 1900).

I have tried to show that we must repudiate any attempt to interpret our responsibilities in the light of the facts of their origin alone. We must insist that the question of the acts by which our Empire has been won is entirely different from the question of the responsibilities we have incurred by winning it. A nation, like an individual, is tied by a mysterious and irrevocable bond to its own past, and to repudiate the duties its past has brought on the ground of the inadvertence, or the wickedness of the acts which have led to them, is only to add one sin to another. The question is not whether we were right in undertaking all that our rule involves, but of the nature of the task itself, and our prospects of success in the effort to perform it.

The task I defined as "nothing less than the reconstruction of the moral, industrial and political ideas of some four or five hundred million of souls of every race and religion and at every stage in civilisation." This I would here correct, substituting "development" for reconstruction, and add that the development must be of what is best in the instincts and traditions of these races themselves. The principle which we are coming to recognise as the teaching of common-sense appears here from a new side as a corollary of the theoretic relation of the Will of a people, however backward its civilisation may be, to its customs and institutions. If there be any truth in the above teaching, there is latent in the laws, institutions and

ritual observances of even the most backward societies the aspiration after a form of life which, while in its details it is adapted to the particular instincts and experience of the people who have developed them, yet in its broad features is human and universal. What a sovereign, or, as I should prefer to call it, a protector nation has to aim at can never be the destruction of the subject's faith in the particular forms in which the general will has expressed itself among them, but in the recognition of the better elements which they contain, and the attempt to develop them in the spirit of the original deposit. Only thus can there be any internal coherence and strength; only thus, I would venture to say, any value to civilisation in the life of the races which by our rule we seek to preserve and educate.

In illustration of my point I would quote from a document which has attracted far less notice in this country than it deserves. Though published in view of the state of matters in China some years ago, it is sufficiently significant as a warning of what might be the result in our own Empire of the policy that is denounced. It bears the date of the thirty-third year of Meiji (1900), and is signed by six representatives of the Great Japan Buddhists' Union at their Headquarters in the Kenninji Temple, Kyoto. Its object is to protest in the name of the "higher religion" and of civilisation against the methods which European missionaries and educational agencies have seen fit to

adopt in China. In their dealings with individuals and with the Government, these, it points out, have often pursued their ends in a spirit of worldliness and self-assertion—the very opposite to that of true religion. On the other hand, by their disregard of the laws and customs of the country, they have succeeded in undermining the respect of their converts, and through them of the worst part of the population, for the existing order. To these causes it attributes in large part the existing distrust of foreign influence throughout the Empire, and the violent outbreaks against its representatives that have recently horrified mankind. By way of contrast and example it goes on to quote the striking action of the Japanese Buddhists who, on the occasion of the destruction by the Chinese of their temple at Amoy, used every effort to dissuade the Home Government from pressing for damages. It ends with an appeal to foreign authorities for a radical change of method, imploring them henceforth to prohibit their agencies from "any line of conduct subversive of the ancient customs and manners of China, or derogating to the laws, or liable to be recognised as producing misprision through partiality displayed towards the converts as against the unbeliever." The true way is to "assume a respectful attitude towards the customs and etiquette as well as the laws of China, however rudimentary those may seem to be; and endeavour by degrees to implant the seeds of civilisation and

religion." Only thus "will the sources of disturbance in China become extinct, and a new era of mental enlightenment immediately dawn upon the Chinese, with every prospect of the reconciliation of the Occidental and Oriental civilisations." These are golden words. In no other way than this will it be possible for us to establish and maintain an empire that is more than one in name.

As a foundation for the whole, Idealism would agree with what would seem to be the obvious suggestion of common-sense, that our first task must be that of building up some sort of loyalty to ourselves in the mind of the subjects. It would merely add, from its own particular point of view, that this can only mean the creation in these vast populations of some sense of their dependence on the institutions which are the symbol of our government for all that they most value in their lives—for peace and security of person and property, for command of the resources of science in the control of nature, for freedom of thought and speech, for their territorial homes, and for the graves and worship of their ancestors. To state the problem in this way does not, perhaps, carry us very far in the direction of its solution, but it has the advantage of taking imperial politics out of the narrow setting it is apt to receive in current discussions. It reminds us, for instance, that such proposals as fiscal reform could be at their best but a small contribution to the real end we have to view, and do not touch the most difficult part of our immediate task—the attach-

ment to ourselves of the native populations of Africa and India. It sets our problem before us in all its extent and in its essential difficulty. But it sets it before us also as a call to the spirit of humanity within ourselves. For it suggests to us that while the forms of civilisation with which we are dealing are manifold, it is the same human will that is working in all.

As the corollary, moreover, of a philosophy that teaches the unity of human nature, it comes with an even more definite suggestion of hope. Feeling is not something separate from intelligence. If we have as yet failed to capture the imagination and the heart of the vast majority of our fellow-subjects, there remains their intelligence. What Green held to be true of Nature (and this was the central point of all his teaching), he held to be still more obviously true of the civilised State. The State is founded on the deepest element in the will, but as will and intelligence are ultimately one, it may be said just for this reason to be "traversed by currents of the intellect," and "where intellect has gone, sentiment has followed." Let the peoples then but *know*. Let them know through education and example what good government *means*, and we may leave it to the spirit of all good of which government is the highest earthly expression to enlist their feeling and conscious will upon its side.

And this suggests a last point: true knowledge comes only through action. On nothing, as

we have seen, does Green lay greater stress than on the effect of participation in government as the only way to turn loyal subjection into intelligent patriotism. One passage bears so directly on the present question that it seems to have been written for our guidance: "That active interest in the service of the State which makes patriotism in the better sense, can hardly arise while the individual's relation to the State is that of a passive recipient of protection in the exercise of his rights of person and property. While this is the case, he will give the State no thanks for the protection, which he will come to take as a matter of course, and will only be conscious of it when it descends upon him with some unusual demand for service or payment, and then he will be conscious of it in the way of resentment. If he is to have a higher feeling of political duty he must take part in the work of the State. He must have a share, direct or indirect, by himself acting as a member, or by voting for the members of supreme or provincial assemblies in making and maintaining the laws which he obeys."[1]

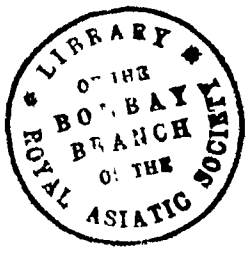
These are words of truth and soberness—the foundation of philosophical and all other forms of radicalism. They are theory indeed; and to the distant administrator contending with the superstition, the petty jealousies and the stupidities of communities scarcely emerged from barbarism, may seem to have little relation to the hard facts

[1] *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 122.

of the situation, while to the governing classes at home they suggest a long vista of agitation in the interest of revolt and separation. But to Green the incapacity of subjects is not the justification but the condemnation of autocratic government, while the uses, to which we forebode upon surmise that representative institutions will be put, can never, in the case of subject nations abroad any more than subject classes at home, be urged as a valid reason why they should be withheld. It becomes, indeed, more and more obvious that in bestowing self-government or any beginning of it upon dependencies, the limits both of the "self" and of the "government" have to be carefully defined. Witness at the present moment the difficulty of regulating the tide of immigration from one part of the Empire to another. But within these limits the ideal can never safely be lost sight of.

CONCLUSION.—Words like the above, together with the philosophy of which they are a part, may at least serve in a time of some discouragement to strengthen us in the true democratic, which is also the true imperialist faith, and to remind us that if we fail to live up to it, it will not be owing to any fault in its theory, but to some defect in ourselves or our instruments, some inability to enter into the common purpose of all civilisation, and to embody the spirit of the best political teaching in our actual administration. What, perhaps, is chiefly wanted

at the present time is not, indeed, that philosophers should be rulers, but that rulers should have something of the rooted conviction of the reality of their best ideals, for which all the great philosophers, and more particularly the philosopher we have been studying, stand.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APPENDIX

Green's Criticism of Popular Logic (p. 28)

"If all reality were reducible to a multitude of connected successions and simultaneities (we must add 'connected,' if such an account of reality is to have any appearance of corresponding with Science) there would still be implied a single subject to which all these were relative. And it would still be misleading to speak (as Mill does) of nature as made up of separate uniformities in respect of simultaneity and succession, since this conveys the notion that each uniformity is independent of all the rest; which is to reduce the world to chaos. That which gives its character to any sequence or simultaneity (that character which Science seeks to ascertain) is not the number of instances in which the sequence or simultaneity has occurred, though that is what we seem to imply when we make 'uniformity' the differentia of the sequence or the simultaneity (the appearance of life in a particular part of the earth, and certain conditions of temperature, etc., could but occur once, yet it is not the less a determined simultaneity which could not have been other than it was); it is its relation to the other simultaneities and successions which, if it be so, form the system of nature.

Now this relation ot all simultaneities and successions to each other, so that one could not be without the rest, is not itself simultaneous with

or successive upon anything. It is not an event—not in time—and simultaneity and sequence are only applicable to events. . . . The experience of the constant sequence of event *e* on event *d* may doubtless lead to the strongest refutation of one on occasion of the other. But how should that cause the belief that *e* will follow *f* when there has been no constant experience of it, or lead to an interrogation of nature in order to explain the apparent irregularity in the sequence of *e* on *f*? In fact, all the attempts to explain 'belief in uniformity' as resulting from the passive experience of constancy in the sequence of events, presuppose some rudimentary conception of nature. Without this, such experience could only yield a bundle of expectations of which one might indefinitely strengthen or weaken another, but of which none could afford any explanation of another. With this rudimentary conception (of which the true account is that it is the presence in us, as our self-consciousness, of the single subject which is presupposed in the possibility of nature) the several constancies and inconstancies become constantly more and more explanatory of each other."[1]

[1] Works, vol. ii. pp. 304-306.

INDEX

Aristotle, 34, 64, 97

Balliol College, 1, 83
Bentham, 36n.
Booth, Sir C., 97
Bosanquet, B., viii, 53, 59n., 89n., 91n.
Bright, John, 105
Burke, Edmund, 69
Butler, 6

Capitalism, 96
Carlyle, 27, 82, 84, 85n.
Christianity, 46, 73
Circumstances, 35, 62, 102
Communism, 77
Cromwell, 62, 82

Democracy, 81 foll.
Desire, 20 foll.
Determinism, 5
Disraeli, 105

Education, 82 foll.
Efficiency, 86
Empire, 103
Evolution, 40 foll.

Factory Acts, 54
Family, the, 94 foll.
Freedom, 24 foll.
Froude, 10, 104

Greek Ethics, 33
God, 13, 14 foll., 39, 42
Good, Theory of, 18 foll.; Common, 54; Individual and Social, 34

Hamilton, 13
Happiness, 24, 27, 35
Hedonism, 4, 27, 29, 35
Hegel, 47, 69
Hobbes, 50, 57, 58, 59n.
Hobhouse, L. T., 54n., 84, 87
Humanism, 8
Humanity, 43
Hume, 6, 22
Huxley, 6

Imperialism, 103 foll.
Individualism, xi, 51, 54, 87 foll., 101
Institutions, 83

James, Professor William, 11
Japan, 107
Jowett, 1

Kant, 13, 25, 73
Knowledge, Theory of, 9 foll.

Labour Politics, 99
Land, 89
Law, 55 foll.
Lewes, G. H., 4
Liberty, 84, 90; *see* Freedom
Locke, 50, 58

MacCunn, Professor, x, 49, 81
M'Taggart, J. M. E., 30
Martineau, J., 6
Mazzini, 63n.
Mill, J. S., 4, 9, 12, 13, 36n., 84, 87, 115
Modern spirit, 3
Motive, 21 foll.

Nationality, 93
Natural rights, 88
Naturalism, 4 foll., 7, 41, 93
Nature, 20, 110; *Law of*, 25, 72
Nettleship, R. L., 1

Owen, Robert, 49, 95

Paine, 52, 73
Palmerston, 105
Personality, 37
Philosophy, 5, 45; Moral, 38; and Practice, 39
Plato, 47, 55, 64, 69n., 93
Pleasure, 26 foll.
Poor Law, 97
Positivism, 43
Pragmatism, 8, 18, 32
Property, 74 foll., 93 foll.
Providence, 63, 69, 73, 93

Rashdall, Dr, 84n.
Reason, 25
Reform, 85
Relation as basis of Knowledge and Reality, 11
Right, 59, 68 foll., 73; Natural, 88
Ritchie, D. G., x, 52n.
Rousseau, 59, 73
Ruskin, 27

St Paul, 25
Seeley, 104
Self, The Timeless, 16
Self-government, 110
—— realisation, 23 foll.
Sidgwick, H., 36n.
Sin, 42
Social contract, 58
Socialism, xii, 49, 91 foll.
Spencer, Herbert., ix, 4, 13, 50, 52
State, 47 foll., 56; Interference, 87
Stoics, 25
Stout, Professor G. F., 23n.

Taylor, Professor A. E., 26n.
Temperance legislation, 89
Theology, *see* God
Toynbee, 83
Trade-unionism, 97

Utilitarianism, 29, 35, 51

Wallace, A. R., 63n.
Wells, H. G., 95;
Will, 5, 20 foll.; and Circumstance, 62 foll.; the General, 67
Working classes, 97

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